



NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AT GRADES 4, 8, AND 12



U.S. Department of Education
NCES 2011-466



Contents

- 1 Executive Summary
- 4 Introduction
- 7 Grade 4
- 20 Grade 8
- 34 Grade 12
- 47 Technical Notes
- 49 Appendix Tables

What Is The Nation's Report Card™?

The Nation's Report Card™ informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time.

Since 1969, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. NAEP collects and reports information on student performance at the national and state levels, making the assessment an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only academic achievement data and related background information are collected. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected.

NAEP is a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. The Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible for carrying out the NAEP project. The National Assessment Governing Board oversees and sets policy for NAEP.

Photo Credits:

© Fuse/Jupiterimages #78774905; Alloy Photography/Veer #AYP1202684; © Tetra Images/Jupiterimages #81896607; © C Squared Studios/Stockbyte/Jupiterimages #83588816; © Tetra Images/Jupiterimages #79249903; © Dalin Brinkman/giftlegacy/iStockphoto #3288724; © Don Bayley/iStockphoto #15781738; © Comstock/Jupiterimages #78462573; © Chris Scredon/iStockphoto #6512314; © Robert Shafer/Brand X Pictures/Jupiterimages #78405366; © Marilyn Nieves/iStockphoto #7606504; © Daniel Laflor/iStockphoto #10989343; Jeremy Edwards/iStockphoto #7474334; © Andreea Manci/iStockphoto #2453130; © Stockbyte/Jupiterimages #7706468; © Media Bakery #BLD0082157; © VisionsOfAmerica/Joe Sohm/Photodisc/Jupiterimages #73069135; © David Leahy/Digital Vision/Jupiterimages #107669711; © VisionsOfAmerica/Joe Sohm/Photodisc/Jupiterimages #73070887; © Media Bakery #SCN0016526; © Fuse/Jupiterimages #78722945; © Media Bakery #BLD0081628; © VisionsOfAmerica/Joe Sohm/Photodisc/Jupiterimages #73072044; © Image Source/Jupiterimages #103060530; © Fuse/Punchstock #78772139; © Dean Mitchell/iStockphoto #14259556; © Nigel Carse/iStockphoto #12174452; © David H. Lewis/iStockphoto #19999900; Photographer's Choice/PunchStock #sb10068210; © 81a/PunchStock #77991814; © Comstock/PunchStock #78469544; © Tetra Images/Jupiterimages #105783674; © Image Source/PunchStock #79338346; © Shane Stezelberger/iStockphoto #4178251; © Fuse/Jupiterimages #78724278; © Tetra Images/Jupiterimages #107700962; © kali9/iStockphoto #15299317; © Fuse/Jupiterimages #79946372; © Image Source/Jupiterimages #87324773; © Media Bakery #SCN0056048; © Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission; © ericsphotography/iStockphoto #1696479; © Photos.com/Jupiterimages #87755743; © PhotoAlto/Alamy B9YN27; © Lynn Seeden/iStockphoto #1930268; © Arthur Tilley/Creatas/Jupiterimages #89603592; © blackwaterimages/iStockphoto #12344947; © Joshua Hodge Photography/iStockphoto #14225125; © Brand X Pictures/PunchStock #78398787; © Media Bakery #SCN0026134; © Media Bakery/DSP0014918; © JGI/Jamie Grill/Blend Images/Jupiterimages #106298614; © S. Greg Panosian/iStockphoto #7675711; © Media Bakery #SCN0056041; © Old Visuals Everett Collection/Jupiterimages #87166555; © ImageState/Jupiterimages #77342655; © Palmer Kane Inc/Jupiterimages #98871256; © Catalin Petolea/iStockphoto #11980161

Executive Summary

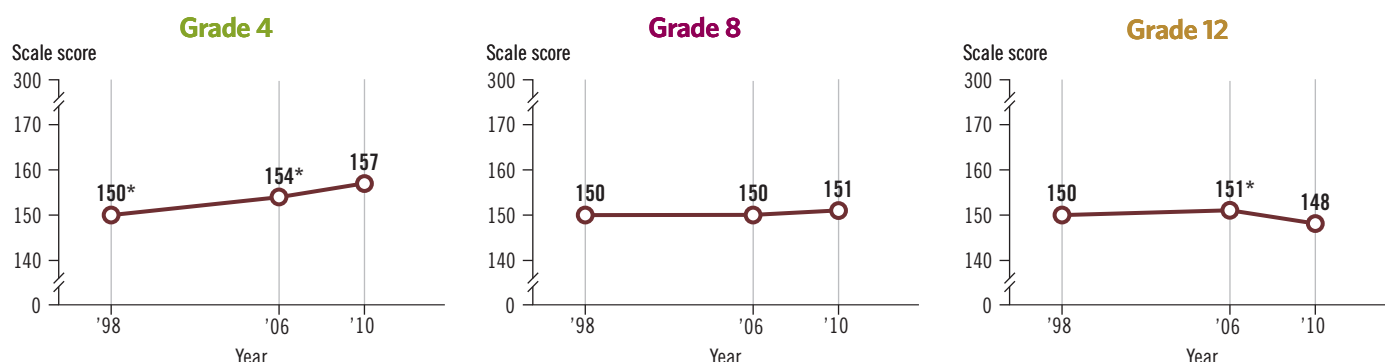
Nationally representative samples of about 7,100 fourth-graders, 9,600 eighth-graders, and 9,900 twelfth-graders participated in the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in civics. At each grade, students responded to questions designed to measure the civics knowledge and skills that are critical to the responsibilities of citizenship in America's constitutional democracy. Comparing the results from the 2010 assessment to results from two previous assessment years shows how students' knowledge and skills in civics have progressed over time.

Students making progress in civics at grade 4 but not at grades 8 and 12

In comparison to earlier civics assessments in 1998 and 2006, the average score in 2010 was

- higher than the scores in both years at grade 4,
- not significantly different from the score in either year at grade 8, and
- lower than the score in 2006 but not significantly different from the score in 1998 at grade 12 (figure A).

Figure A. Trend in fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade NAEP civics average scores



What are students studying in civics?

88% of fourth-graders had teachers who reported emphasizing politics and government to a small extent or more in social studies classes in 2010.

78% of eighth-graders reported studying about Congress in 2010.

67% of twelfth-graders reported studying about the U.S. Constitution in 2010.



Percentages of fourth-graders at or above *Basic* and *Proficient* levels increase

The NAEP *Basic* level denotes partial mastery of the knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at each grade. Seventy-seven percent of fourth-graders, 72 percent of eighth-graders, and 64 percent of twelfth-graders performed at or above the *Basic* level in civics in 2010. The percentages of students at or above *Basic* in 2010 were higher than in 2006 and 1998 at grade 4, but not significantly different from previous assessment years at grades 8 and 12.

The *Proficient* level represents solid academic performance to which all students at each grade assessed should aspire. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter. Twenty-seven percent of fourth-graders, 22 percent of eighth-graders, and 24 percent of twelfth-graders performed at or above the *Proficient* level in civics in 2010. The percentages of students at or above *Proficient* in 2010 were higher than in 2006 and 1998 at grade 4, not significantly different from the percentages in the previous assessment years at grade 8, and lower than 2006 at grade 12.

No significant changes in percentages of students at *Advanced*

The *Advanced* level represents superior performance. Two percent of fourth-graders, 1 percent of eighth-graders, and 4 percent of twelfth-graders performed at the *Advanced* level in civics in 2010. There were no significant changes in the percentages of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders at *Advanced* in comparison to previous assessment years.

Examples of skills demonstrated by students performing at each achievement level

Basic

- Recognize taxes as the main source of government funding (grade 4).
- Identify a right protected by the First Amendment (grade 8).
- Interpret a political cartoon (grade 12).

Proficient

- Identify a purpose of the U.S. Constitution (grade 4).
- Recognize a role performed by the Supreme Court (grade 8).
- Define the term “melting pot” and argue if it applies to the U.S. (grade 12).

Advanced

- Explain two ways countries can deal with shared problems (grade 4).
- Name two actions citizens can take to encourage Congress to pass a law (grade 8).
- Compare the citizenship requirements of the U.S. to other countries (grade 12).



Hispanic students make gains from 1998 to 2010 at all three grades

Average civics scores for Hispanic students were higher in 2010 than in 2006 at grade 8, and higher than in 1998 at all three grades. Gains for Hispanic students contributed to a narrowing of the White – Hispanic score gap in comparison to the gaps in earlier assessment years for grades 8 and 12. At grade 4, the White – Hispanic gap in 2010 was not significantly different from the gap in 2006 but narrowed in comparison to 1998.

Performance improves from 1998 to 2010 for most racial/ethnic groups at grade 4

Average scores were higher in 2010 than in 1998 for fourth-graders in all racial/ethnic groups with samples large enough to report results. Although not represented in the table below, the percentages of White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander students performing below the *Basic* level decreased from 1998 to 2010, and the percentages at *Proficient* increased.

Female students score higher than male students at grade 4

The average score for female fourth-graders increased since 2006, while there was no significant change in the score for male fourth-graders over the same period. In 2010, female students scored 7 points higher on average than male students at grade 4, which was larger than the 2-point score difference between the two groups in earlier assessment years.

The average score for female twelfth-graders was lower in 2010 than in 2006 and 1998, while there was no significant change in the score for male twelfth-graders in comparison to either year. There was no significant difference between the scores of female and male students in 2010 at grade 12 or grade 8.

Characteristic	Grade 4		Grade 8		Grade 12	
	Since 1998	Since 2006	Since 1998	Since 2006	Since 1998	Since 2006
Overall	▲	▲	◆	◆	◆	▼
Race/ethnicity						
White	▲	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Black	▲	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Hispanic	▲	◆	▲	▲	▲	◆
Asian/Pacific Islander	▲	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
American Indian/ Alaska Native	‡	◆	‡	◆	‡	◆
Gender						
Male	▲	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Female	▲	▲	◆	◆	▼	▼
Gaps						
White – Black	Narrowed	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
White – Hispanic	Narrowed	◆	Narrowed	Narrowed	Narrowed	Narrowed
Female – Male	Widened	Widened	◆	◆	◆	◆

▲ Indicates the score was higher in 2010.

▼ Indicates the score was lower in 2010.

◆ Indicates no significant change in the score or the gap in 2010.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

Introduction



Responsible citizens of a constitutional democracy such as the United States should have adequate knowledge of the country's principles and institutions, skills in applying this knowledge to civic life, and dispositions to protect individual rights and promote the common good. Civics instruction begins in grade school and continues into high school. The 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics assessment measures how well fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders are learning the knowledge and skills of democratic citizenship and government. Comparing the results from the 2010 assessment to results from previous assessments in 1998 and 2006 shows how students' knowledge and skills in civics at these grade levels have progressed over time.

The Civics Framework

The National Assessment Governing Board oversees the development of NAEP frameworks that describe the specific knowledge and skills that should be assessed in each subject. Frameworks incorporate ideas and input from subject area experts, school administrators, policymakers, parents, and others. The *Civics Framework for the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress* describes the types of questions that should be included in the assessment and how they should be designed and scored. The 1998, 2006, and 2010 civics assessments were developed using the same framework.

The civics framework specifies that the assessment questions address the following three interrelated components: knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions. Taken together, these components should form the essential elements of civic education in the United States. Each question in the assessment has both a knowledge and an intellectual skills component. A portion of the questions also measures participatory skills and/or civic dispositions.

Civic Knowledge: It is important that all students have an opportunity to consider essential questions about government and civil society. Although there are various ways of phrasing these questions, the framework follows the *National*

Standards for Civics and Government in organizing them in the following five major categories:

- I. What are civic life, politics, and government?
- II. What are the foundations of the American political system?
- III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
- IV. What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- V. What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

Intellectual and Participatory Skills: If citizens are to exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities as members of self-governing communities, they not only need to acquire a body of knowledge about civic life, politics, and government, but also need to develop relevant intellectual and participatory skills. The intellectual skills essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship are categorized in the framework as *identifying and describing; explaining and analyzing; and evaluating, taking, and defending positions* on public issues. Participatory skills essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship are categorized as *interacting,*

monitoring, and influencing. Since NAEP cannot directly assess civic participation, the framework specifies that assessment questions be designed to measure whether students can identify participatory skills, recognize their purpose, explain how to use them, or specify how best to achieve diverse results by using particular skills.

Civic Dispositions: The third component of civic education refers to the private and public character traits essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy. The framework specifies the following five civic dispositions that contribute to the political efficacy of the individual, the healthy functioning of the political system, a sense of dignity and worth, and the common good:

- Becoming an independent member of society;
- Respecting individual worth and human dignity;
- Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen;
- Participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner; and
- Promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy.

More detailed information about each of the three major components of the assessment is provided in the civics framework for 2010, which can be found at <http://www.nagb.org/publications/frameworks/civicsframework.pdf>.

Reporting NAEP Results

The results from the 2010 NAEP civics assessment are based on nationally representative samples of public and private school students at grades 4, 8, and 12 (table 1). Unlike NAEP assessments in other subjects such as reading, mathematics, and science, the civics assessment was not designed to report results for individual states or large urban districts.

Table 1. Number of participating schools and students in NAEP civics assessment, by grade: 2010

Grade	Number of schools	Number of students
Grade 4	540	7,100
Grade 8	470	9,600
Grade 12	460	9,900

NOTE: The number of schools is rounded to the nearest ten. The number of students is rounded to the nearest hundred.

Scale scores

NAEP civics results are reported as average scores on a 0–300 scale for each grade. Although the NAEP scale score ranges are identical for grades 4, 8, and 12, they were derived independently, and therefore scores cannot be compared across grades. For example, the average score of 167 for White students at grade 4 does not denote higher performance than the score of 160 for White students at grade 8. NAEP scores also cannot be compared across subjects.

In addition to reporting an overall civics score for each grade, scale scores are reported at five percentiles to show trends in results for students performing at lower (10th and 25th percentiles), middle (50th percentile), and higher (75th and 90th percentiles) levels.

Achievement levels

Based on recommendations from policymakers, educators, and members of the general public, the Governing Board sets specific achievement levels for each subject area and grade. Achievement levels are performance standards showing what students should know and be able to do. NAEP results are reported as percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels and at the *Advanced* level.

As provided by law, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), upon review of congressionally mandated evaluations of NAEP, has determined that achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted with caution. The NAEP achievement levels have been widely used by national and state officials.

NAEP Achievement Levels

Basic denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

Proficient represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.

Advanced represents superior performance.

Interpreting the Results

Changes in performance over time

National results from the 2010 civics assessment are compared to results from two earlier assessment years. NAEP reports results using widely accepted statistical standards; findings are reported based on statistical significance set at .05 with appropriate adjustments for multiple comparisons (see the Technical Notes for more information). The symbol (*) is used in tables and figures to indicate that an earlier year's score or percentage is significantly different from the 2010 results. Only those differences that are found to be statistically significant are discussed as higher or lower. The same standard applies when comparing the performance of one student group to another.

A significant increase or decrease in scores from one assessment year to the next is reliable evidence that student performance has in fact changed. However, NAEP is not designed to identify the causes of these changes. Furthermore, the many factors that may influence average student achievement scores also change over time. These include educational policies and practices, available resources, and the demographic characteristics of the student body.

Explore Additional Results

Not all of the data from the NAEP civics assessment are presented in this report. Additional results can be found on the Nation's Report Card website at http://nationsreportcard.gov/civics_2010 and in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.



Accommodations and exclusions in NAEP

It is important to assess all selected students from the target population, including students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL). To accomplish this goal, many of the same testing accommodations allowed on state testing (e.g., extra testing time or individual rather than group administration) are provided for SD and ELL students participating in NAEP. Accommodations were first made available for the civics assessment in 1998.

Even with the availability of accommodations, some students may still be excluded. See appendix **tables A-1** through **A-3** for the percentages of students accommodated and excluded at each of the three grades. More information about NAEP's policy on the inclusion of special-needs students is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/inclusion.asp>.

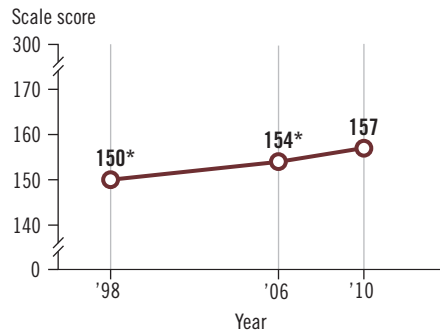
GRADE 4

Fourth-graders' performance improves since 2006

The average civics score for the nation's fourth-graders was higher in 2010 than in the last assessment in 2006. There were no significant changes in the White – Black and White – Hispanic score gaps from 2006 to 2010; however, gains for female students have resulted in an increase in the score difference between female and male students.

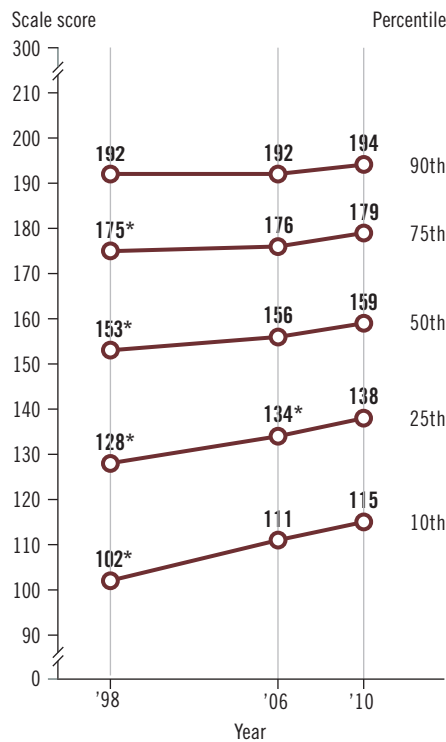


Figure 1. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP civics average scores



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

Figure 2. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP civics percentile scores



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

Fourth-graders post highest average score to date

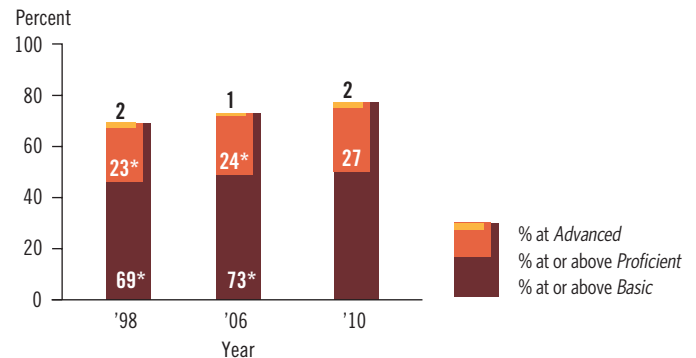
Students' performance on the NAEP civics assessment continued to improve in 2010 at grade 4. The average score for the nation's fourth-graders was 3 points higher in 2010 than in 2006 and 7 points higher than in 1998 (**figure 1**).

Students at the 25th percentile posted a 4-point increase from 2006 to 2010, while any apparent increases at the 10th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles were not statistically significant (**figure 2**). In comparison to 1998, scores were higher in 2010 for all but the highest performing students (those at the 90th percentile).

Percentages of students at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels increase

Seventy-seven percent of students performed at or above the *Basic* level in 2010, and 27 percent performed at or above the *Proficient* level (**figure 3**). Both percentages were higher in 2010 than in the two earlier assessment years. The percentage of students at the *Advanced* level in 2010 was not significantly different from the percentages in 2006 and 1998.

Figure 3. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP civics achievement-level results



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

No significant change in performance of racial/ethnic groups since 2006

There were no significant changes from 2006 to 2010 in the average scores for any of the five racial/ethnic groups that NAEP reports on (figure 4). In comparison to 1998, the scores in 2010 were higher for White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander students.

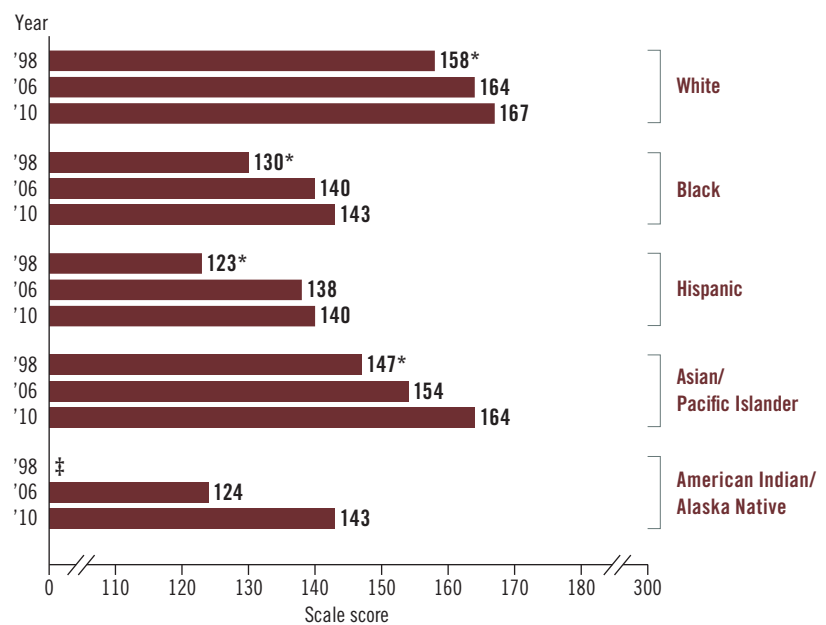
A closer look at the achievement-level results from 1998 to 2010 shows where improvements were made at different levels. The percentages of students performing at the *Proficient* level were higher in 2010 than in 1998 for White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander students (figure 5). The percentages of Black and Hispanic students performing at the *Basic* level also increased over the same period. There were no significant changes in the percentage of students at *Advanced* for any of the racial/ethnic groups.

In 2010, both White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored higher on average than Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students. The average scores of White and Asian/Pacific Islander students were not significantly different from each other.

Additional Results for Student Groups

Achievement-level results and percentile scores provide additional insight into the performance of student groups. See appendix tables A-4 and A-5 for additional fourth-grade results for the student groups highlighted in this section. Similar NAEP results for other student groups can be found in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

Figure 4. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP civics average scores, by race/ethnicity

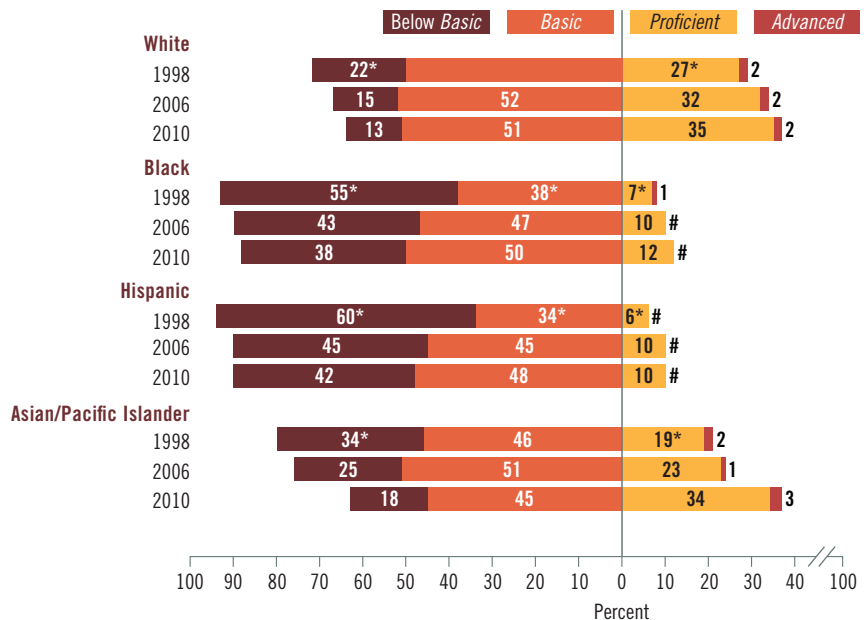


§ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

Figure 5. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP civics achievement-level results, by selected racial/ethnic groups



Rounds to zero.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

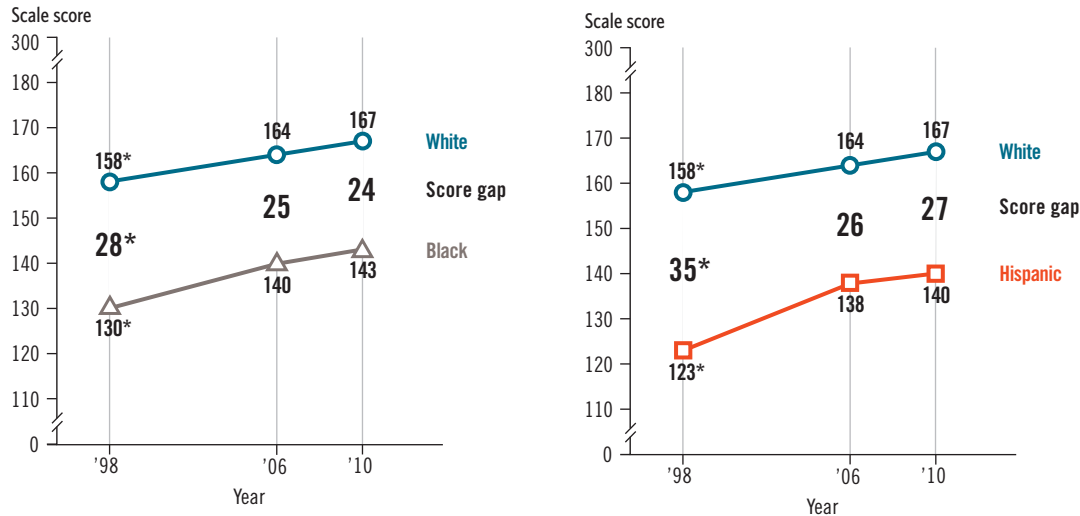
NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Results are not shown for students whose race/ethnicity was American Indian/Alaska Native or unclassified. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

No change in racial/ethnic gaps since 2006

In 2010, White students scored 24 points higher on average than Black students and 27 points higher than Hispanic students (figure 6). There was no significant change in either gap from 2006 to 2010. Both racial/ethnic gaps narrowed compared to 1998.



Figure 6. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP civics average scores and score gaps, by selected racial/ethnic groups



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.

Table 2. Percentage of students assessed in fourth-grade NAEP civics, by race/ethnicity: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Race/ethnicity	1998	2006	2010
White	71*	56	56
Black	16	15	15
Hispanic	9*	20	21
Asian/Pacific Islander	3*	5	5
American Indian/ Alaska Native	#	2	1

Rounds to zero.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Detail may not sum to totals because results are not shown for students whose race/ethnicity was unclassified.

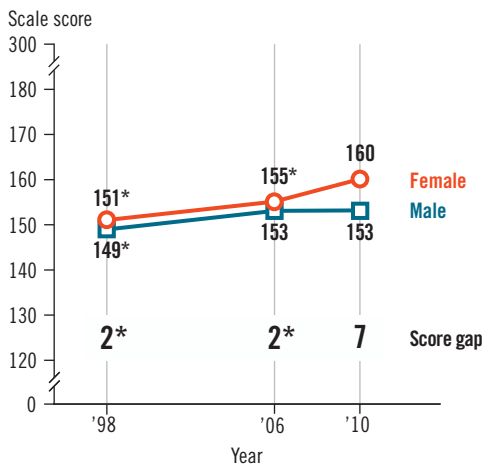
No significant change since 2006 in students' racial/ethnic composition

The proportion of fourth-graders in each of the five racial/ethnic groups that NAEP reports on has remained relatively stable since 2006 (table 2). In comparison to the first assessment in 1998, however, the percentage of White students decreased from 71 to 56 percent, the percentage of Hispanic students increased from 9 to 21 percent, and the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students increased from 3 to 5 percent.

Recent gains for female students create gender gap

The average score for female students increased 5 points from 2006 to 2010, while there was no significant change in the score for male students over the same period (**figure 7**). The gain for female students contributed to a 7-point gender gap in 2010, whereas the apparent differences between male and female students in previous assessment years were not statistically significant.

Figure 7. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP civics average scores and score gaps, by gender



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

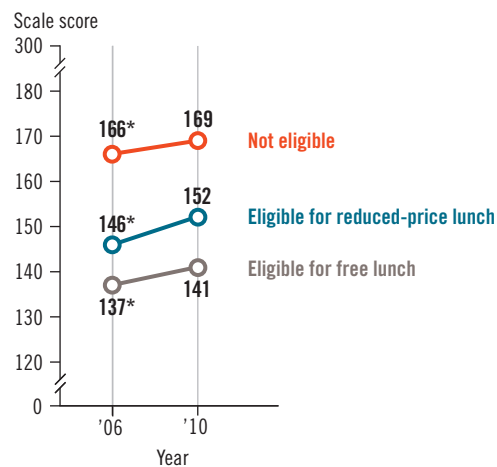
NOTE: Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores. The score differences between male and female students were not found to be statistically significant in 1998 and 2006.

Scores increase across income levels

NAEP uses students' eligibility for the National School Lunch Program as an indicator of low income. Students from lower-income families are eligible for either free or reduced-price school lunches, while students from higher-income families are not (see the Technical Notes for eligibility criteria).

Students who are not eligible typically score higher on average than those eligible for reduced-price lunch, who in turn score higher than those eligible for free lunch. The average scores for all three groups were higher in 2010 than in 2006 (**figure 8**).

Figure 8. Average scores in fourth-grade NAEP civics, by eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch: 2006 and 2010



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

Table 3. Percentage of students assessed in fourth-grade NAEP civics, by eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch: 2006 and 2010

Eligibility for school lunch	2006	2010
Eligible for free lunch	36	41
Eligible for reduced-price lunch	7	6
Not eligible	49	48
Information not available	7	5

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Almost one-half of fourth-graders eligible for the National School Lunch Program

Forty-one percent of fourth-graders were eligible for free lunch, 6 percent were eligible for reduced-price lunch, and 48 percent were not eligible for the lunch program in 2010 (**table 3**). There were no significant changes since 2006 in the percentages of students based on their eligibility for the school lunch program.

Teachers of over two-thirds of fourth-graders report at least some emphasis on civics topics

As part of the 2010 fourth-grade NAEP assessment, questionnaires were completed by the teachers of participating students. One of the questions asked teachers to report on the extent to which they emphasized certain topics as part of their social studies classes. Teachers selected one of four responses for each of the five topics related to civics: “not at all,” “small extent,” “moderate extent,” or “large extent.”

When the average scores for students whose teachers reported emphasizing each topic to a small, moderate, or large extent were combined and compared to the score for students whose teachers did not emphasize the topic at all, higher scores were associated with at least some emphasis for all but one of the topics (**figure 9**). For example, students whose teachers reported emphasizing politics and government to a small extent or more scored 6 points higher on average than students whose teachers reported not emphasizing the topic at all. The pattern was similar for topics related to the foundations of U.S. democracy, the

U.S. Constitution, and the roles of citizens in U.S. democracy. Average scores did not differ significantly for students whose teachers reported emphasizing world affairs to a small extent or more and those whose teachers reported no emphasis on the topic at all.

Over two-thirds of fourth-graders had teachers who reported emphasizing each of the five civics topics to a small extent or more (**table 4**). With one exception, the percentages of students whose teachers reported emphasizing the topic to a small or moderate extent were higher than the percentages of students whose teachers reported not emphasizing it at all or doing so to a large extent. For the topic related to world affairs, the percentage of students whose teachers reported a small emphasis was higher than the percentage whose teachers reported not emphasizing it at all, which in turn was higher than the percentages of students whose teachers reported emphasizing it to a moderate or large extent.

Figure 9. Average scores in fourth-grade NAEP civics, by teachers' responses to a question about the extent to which they have emphasized various topics in their social studies classes: 2010

To what extent have you emphasized the following topics in your social studies class?

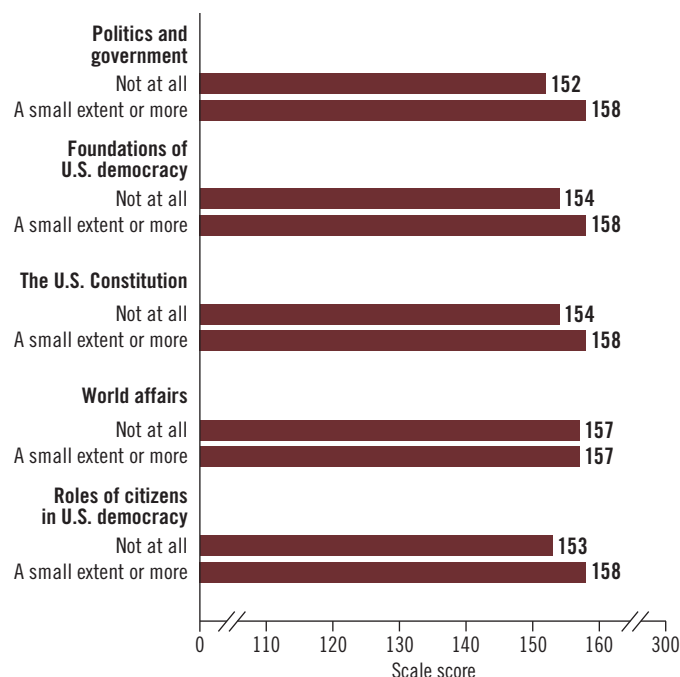


Table 4. Percentage of students assessed in fourth-grade NAEP civics, by the extent to which their teachers emphasized various topics in their social studies classes: 2010

Civics topics	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent
Politics and government	12	46	35	7
Foundations of U.S. democracy	19	37	34	10
The U.S. Constitution	19	42	31	8
World affairs	30	49	17	4
Roles of citizens in U.S. democracy	12	43	34	11

Explore Additional Results

Results for other background questions from the fourth-grade student, teacher, and school questionnaires are available in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

Assessment Content at Grade 4

To reflect developmental differences expected of students at varying grade levels, the proportion of the civics assessment devoted to each of the five knowledge components varies for each grade assessed as specified in the civics framework.

Because the assessment covered a range of topics and included more questions than any one student could answer, each student took just a portion of the assessment. The 91 questions that made up the entire fourth-grade assessment were divided into six sections, each containing a mixture of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. Each student responded to questions in two 25-minute sections.



Knowledge Components

25% **What are civic life, politics, and government?**

These questions focus on comprehension of basic terminology and concepts of government.

20% **What are the foundations of the American political system?**

These questions focus on students' understanding of American values and basic principles as expressed in core documents (e.g., the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights).

15% **How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?**

These questions focus on understanding the meaning and importance of the U.S. Constitution, and the major responsibilities of state and local governments.

10% **What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?**

These questions focus on understanding the concept of nation, world affairs, conflict among nations, and the need for peaceful resolution among nations.

30% **What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?**

These questions focus on the basic meaning of U.S. citizenship, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the opportunities for civic participation.

Civics Achievement-Level Descriptions for Grade 4

NAEP civics achievement-level descriptions outline expectations of student performance at each grade. The specific descriptions of what fourth-graders should know and be able to do at the *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* levels in civics are presented below. NAEP achievement levels are cumulative; therefore, student performance at the *Proficient* level includes the competencies associated with the *Basic* level, and the *Advanced* level includes the skills and knowledge associated with both the *Basic* and the *Proficient* levels. The cut score indicating the lower end of the score range for each level is noted in the parentheses.

Basic (136)

Fourth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should have some understanding of what government is and what it does, and they should be able to identify some things that government is not allowed to do. They should be able to explain purposes of rules in the school and the community and to describe what happens when people break laws. These students should understand how national holidays and symbols such as the flag, the Statue of Liberty, and the Fourth of July reflect shared American values, and they should be able to identify different types of diversity in American society. They should be able to describe ways to settle disagreements or conflicts peacefully. They should be able to name the president and their state governor and to identify rights and responsibilities of a citizen. They should know some ways that students can participate in governing their school and community, and they should be able to describe qualities of a good leader. Finally, these students should know that the world is divided into many countries.

Proficient (177)

Fourth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should have a good understanding of what the American Government does and of the reasons why it is not allowed to act in certain ways. They should be able to explain why we have laws. These students should be able to recognize diversity in American society and that Americans are united by shared beliefs and principles. They should know that the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are founding documents of American democracy. They should be able to explain how people make decisions about the ways they live together in a democracy and how groups in schools and communities can manage conflict peacefully. They should know what it means to be a citizen of their state and the nation, and they should be able to distinguish between rights and responsibilities of citizens. They should understand why it is important for people to participate in governing their school and community. Finally, these students should be able to describe ways in which countries interact with one another.

Advanced (215)

Fourth-grade students performing at the *Advanced* level should understand and be able to explain some purposes of government. They should recognize differences between power and authority when given examples and should understand differences between limited and unlimited government. These students should be able to explain why it is important that citizens share a commitment to the values of American democracy, and they should be aware of the benefits and challenges of both unity and diversity in American society. They should be able to distinguish between services provided by local and state levels of government. These students should be able to describe how government can make it possible for people to accomplish goals they could not achieve alone. They should be able to identify ways in which citizens can keep track of their government's actions and understand the connection between rights and responsibilities of a citizen. Finally, they should be able to explain how nations benefit when they resolve conflicts peacefully.

What Fourth-Graders Know and Can Do in Civics

The item map below is useful for understanding performance at different levels on the NAEP scale. The scale scores on the left represent the scores for students who were likely to get the items correct or complete. The cut score at the low end of the range for each achievement level is boxed. The descriptions of selected assessment questions indicating what students need to do to answer the question correctly are listed on the right.

For example, the map on this page shows that fourth-graders performing at the *Basic* level with a score of 163 were likely to be able to identify taxes as the main source of government funding. Students performing at the *Proficient* level with a score of 194 were likely to be able to identify an idea from the Declaration of Independence. Students at the *Advanced* level with a score of 240 were likely to be able to explain the meaning of the Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" speech.

GRADE 4 NAEP CIVICS ITEM MAP

Scale score	Question description
300	
//	
Advanced	257 Name two rights of U.S. citizens and explain why they are important (shown on pages 18 and 19)
	256 Explain two ways countries can deal with shared problems
	240 Explain the meaning of the Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" speech
	227 <i>Identify a responsibility of U.S. citizens</i>
	215 <i>Identify the appropriate official to contact to solve a problem</i>
	215
Proficient	214 <i>Recognize different types of governments</i>
	207 Give an example of how to help one's country and explain why it is important
	194 <i>Identify an idea from the Declaration of Independence (shown on page 17)</i>
	188 <i>Evaluate the concept of democracy presented in an article</i>
	187 <i>Understand the meaning of "majority decides" in a classroom context</i>
	181 <i>Identify a purpose of the U.S. Constitution</i>
	179 <i>Recognize why the U.S. Constitution limits the powers of government</i>
	178 <i>Identify a way to express an opinion on public policy issue</i>
	177
Basic	174 <i>Identify the method used to select public office holders</i>
	170 <i>Recognize examples of civic participation</i>
	168 <i>Identify local government as the provider of drinking water (shown on page 16)</i>
	163 <i>Recognize taxes as the main source of government funding</i>
	155 <i>Identify a function of the military</i>
	155 <i>Identify an example of a person using power without having the right to</i>
	148 <i>Identify rules for a park</i>
	138 <i>Recognize the meaning of a national symbol</i>
	137 <i>Identify a rule that is unfair</i>
	136
	126 <i>Identify a civic responsibility</i>
	84 <i>Identify a reason to obey a law</i>
	71 <i>Identify the President of the United States</i>
//	
0	

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question. The position of a question on the scale represents the scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of successfully answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct. Scale score ranges for civics achievement levels are referenced on the map.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2010 Civics Assessment.



Civics Knowledge Component: How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

Which of the following is most likely responsible for making sure that your community has safe drinking water?

- Ⓐ The fire department
- Ⓑ The county hospital
- Ⓒ The attorney general
- Ⓓ The local government

This sample question from the 2010 fourth-grade civics assessment measures students' knowledge of the responsibilities and services provided by the government. Sixty-six percent of fourth-graders were able to identify the correct response to the question regarding the role of local government in providing safe drinking water for citizens.

Percentage of fourth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D	Omitted
6	13	14	66	1

The table below shows the percentage of fourth-graders within each achievement level who answered this question correctly. For example, 67 percent of fourth-graders at the *Basic* level selected the correct answer choice.

Percentage of fourth-grade students responding correctly at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
66	46	67	80	‡

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

Explore Additional Sample Questions

More questions from the NAEP civics assessment can be found in the Questions Tool at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmlsx/landing.aspx>.





Civics Knowledge Component: What are the foundations of the American political system?

The paragraph below is a summary of the introduction to the Declaration of Independence.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are created equal; that they are given certain rights that cannot be taken away; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to protect these rights, governments are created that get their powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

Which of the following ideas is in the summary of the Declaration of Independence?

- Ⓐ People in the United States should have some control over the government.
- Ⓑ Kings can rule in the United States, as long as they are fair to people.
- Ⓒ The smartest people should control the government of the United States.
- Ⓓ Everyone in the United States should try to be elected to the government.

This sample question is from a set of items that measures fourth-graders' knowledge of the Declaration of Independence. Fifty-two percent of fourth-graders were able to correctly identify the main idea in the summary of the introduction to the Declaration of Independence.

Percentage of fourth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D	Omitted
52	11	10	27	1

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The table below shows the percentage of fourth-graders within each achievement level who answered this question correctly. For example, 49 percent of fourth-graders at the *Basic* level selected the correct answer choice.

Percentage of fourth-grade students responding correctly at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
52	35	49	73	‡

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

Civics Knowledge Component: What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

Your class at school has a new student from a country that has laws that are very different from those in the United States. Your teacher has asked you to help your new classmate learn about important rights that belong to citizens of the United States.

Write down TWO important rights that people have in the United States that you think your new classmate should know about. Then tell why it is important to have each of these rights.

COMPLETE RESPONSE:

Right 1:

The right to vote

It is important to have this right because

before certain people could not vote. When you vote you are telling your opinion.

Right 2:

The right to assemble peacefully

It is important to have this right because

it can make things happen and we can tell if we don't like some thing.

ACCEPTABLE RESPONSE:

Right 1:

to vote

It is important to have this right because

If the government alone chooses the president they may pick someone who people don't like.

Right 2:

laws

It is important to have this right because

If there were no laws everything would be messed up.

This sample constructed-response question measures fourth-graders' knowledge of the roles of citizens in American democracy. Successful responses demonstrated an understanding of the rights of citizens of the United States and knowledge of why those rights are valued among Americans. Responses to this question were rated using four levels. Spelling and grammar were not considered in rating responses to the question.

Complete responses provided two rights of American citizens with two explanations for why the rights are important. Credited responses included examples such as the right to a trial and the right to freedom of religion.

Acceptable responses provided one or two rights of Americans with one explanation.

Partial responses provided one or two rights with no explanations.

Unacceptable responses provided no rights or explanations.

The first sample student response on the left was rated "Complete," because it provided two rights of citizens in the United States and an explanation for why each right was important. The Constitution contains several passages and Amendments describing ways U.S. citizens cannot be denied the right to vote. The response describes that while at one time certain people could not vote, they now have a right to vote and to express their opinions by casting votes in open elections. In addition, the response describes that people have the right to peaceably assemble; this right is important

because it allows collective action and protest, which is necessary in a democracy. Six percent of fourth-graders' responses to this question received a "Complete" rating.

The second sample student response on the right was rated "Acceptable" because it provided one right of citizens in the United States and explained why that right was important. Credit was given for the first part of the response under "Right 1" and the corresponding explanation, because the explanation recognizes the fact that it is the right of the people to express their views on how they are governed. No credit was given for the second part of the response under "Right 2" because while laws are necessary for a civil society, they do not constitute a "right" of citizens of the United States. Fourteen percent of fourth-graders' responses to this question received an "Acceptable" rating.

Percentage of fourth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Complete	Acceptable	Partial	Unacceptable	Omitted
6	14	8	68	3

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because the percentage of responses rated as "Off-task" is not shown. Off-task responses are those that do not provide any information related to the assessment task.

The table below shows the percentage of fourth-graders within each achievement-level interval whose responses to this question were rated as "Complete." For example, 2 percent of fourth-graders at the *Basic* level provided responses rated as "Complete."

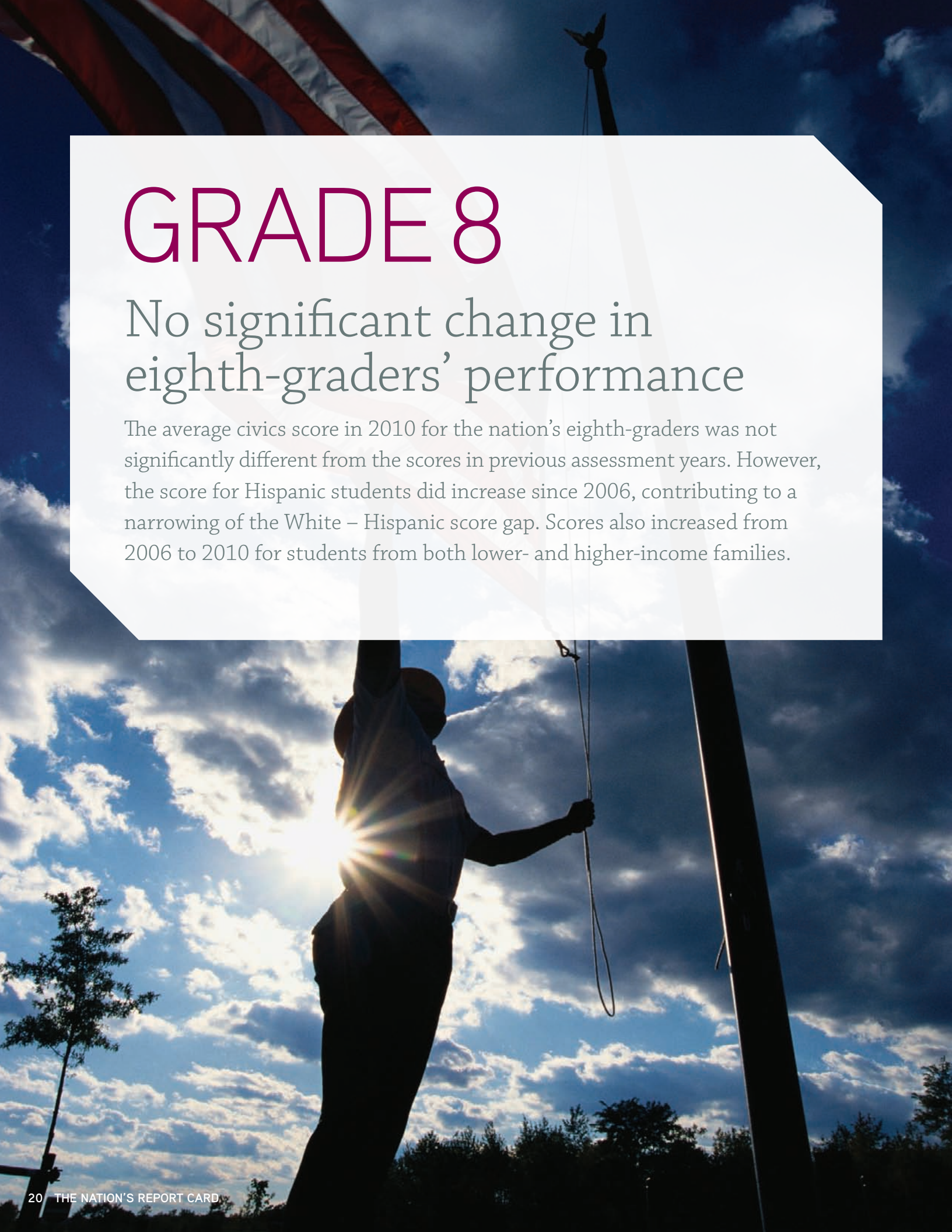
Percentage of fourth-grade students' responses rated as "Complete" at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
6	#	2	15	⚡

Rounds to zero.

⚡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.





GRADE 8

No significant change in eighth-graders' performance

The average civics score in 2010 for the nation's eighth-graders was not significantly different from the scores in previous assessment years. However, the score for Hispanic students did increase since 2006, contributing to a narrowing of the White – Hispanic score gap. Scores also increased from 2006 to 2010 for students from both lower- and higher-income families.

Figure 10. Trend in eighth-grade NAEP civics average scores

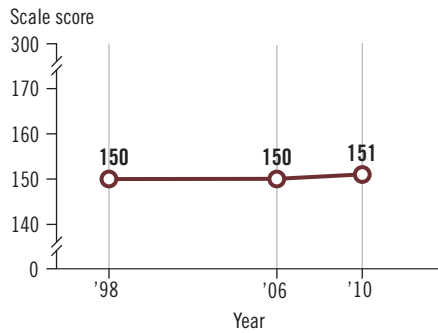
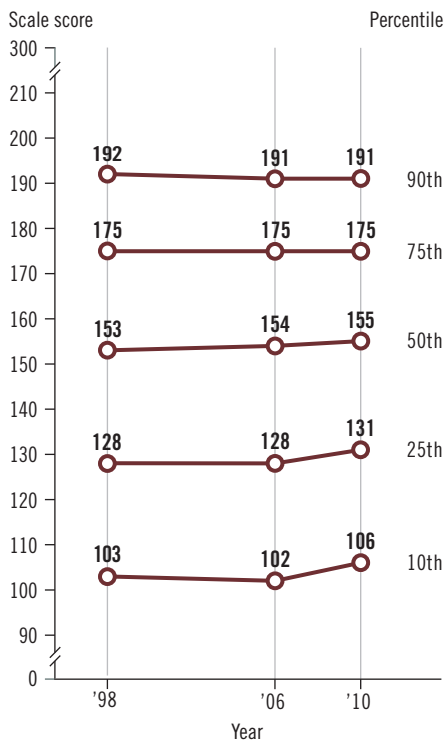


Figure 11. Trend in eighth-grade NAEP civics percentile scores



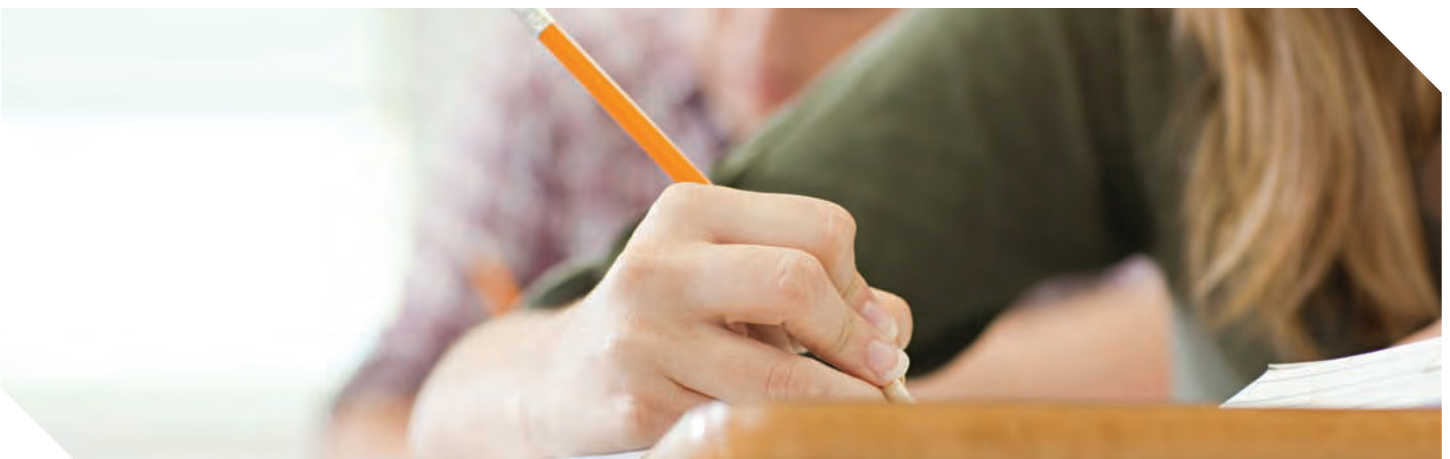
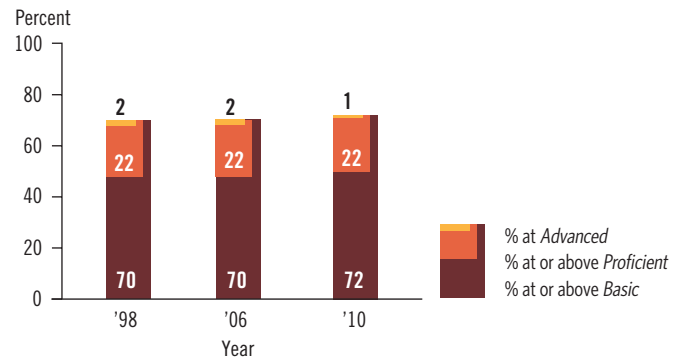
No significant change in eighth-grade score

The average score on the NAEP civics assessment in 2010 at grade 8 was not significantly different from the scores on previous assessments in 2006 and 1998 (**figure 10**). There were also no significant changes in scores at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles in comparison to the previous years (**figure 11**).

About one-fifth of students perform at or above *Proficient*

Seventy-two percent of students performed at or above the *Basic* level in 2010, and 22 percent performed at or above the *Proficient* level (**figure 12**). There were no significant changes in the percentages of students performing at or above *Basic*, at or above *Proficient*, or at *Advanced* in comparison to the previous years.

Figure 12. Trend in eighth-grade NAEP civics achievement-level results



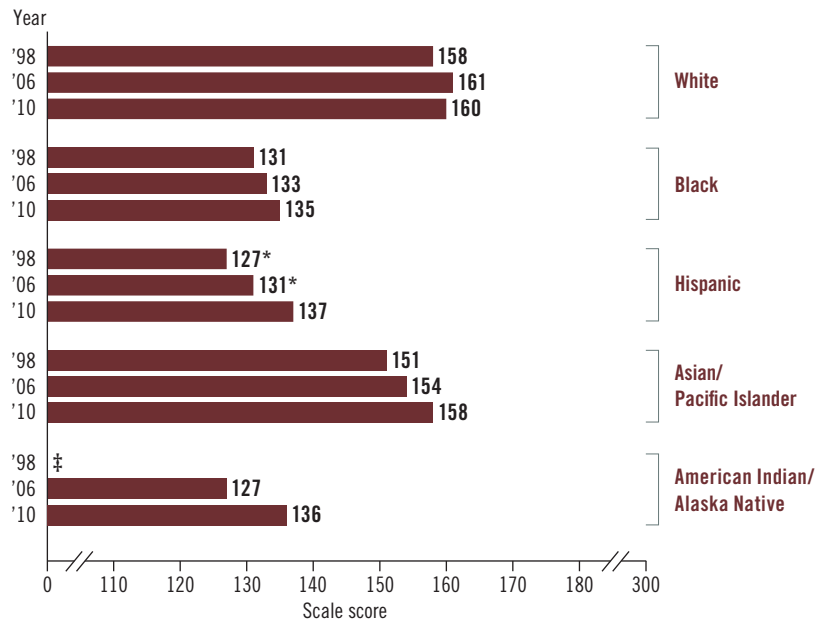
Hispanic students make gains

The average score in 2010 for Hispanic students was 5 points¹ higher than in 2006 and 10 points higher than in 1998 (figure 13). Although not shown here, Hispanic students made gains since 2006 at the 25th and 75th percentiles (see appendix table A-7). There were no significant changes in the average scores for any of the other four racial/ethnic groups in comparison to either 2006 or 1998.

In 2010, both White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored higher on average than Black and Hispanic students. Other apparent differences in scores between racial/ethnic groups were not statistically significant (see the section on Interpreting Statistical Significance in the Technical Notes).

¹ The score-point difference is based on the difference between the unrounded scores as opposed to the rounded scores shown in the figure.

Figure 13. Trend in eighth-grade NAEP civics average scores, by race/ethnicity



‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

Table 5. Percentage of students assessed in eighth-grade NAEP civics, by race/ethnicity: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Race/ethnicity	1998	2006	2010
White	70*	60	59
Black	15	15	14
Hispanic	10*	18	20
Asian/Pacific Islander	3*	4	5
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	2	1

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Detail may not sum to totals because results are not shown for students whose race/ethnicity was unclassified.

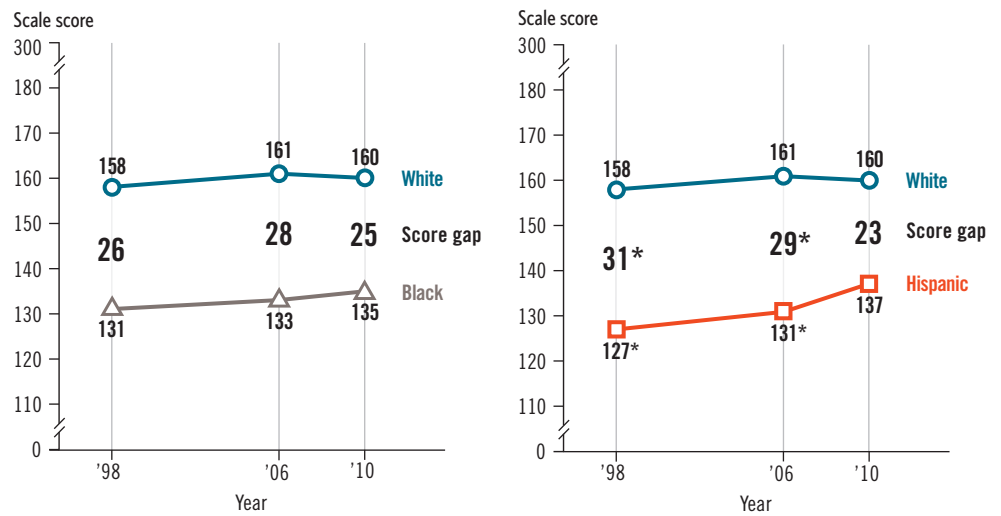
No significant change since 2006 in students' racial/ethnic composition

The proportion of eighth-graders in each of the five racial/ethnic groups that NAEP reports on has remained relatively stable since 2006 (table 5). In comparison to the first assessment in 1998, however, the percentage of White students decreased from 70 to 59 percent, the percentage of Hispanic students increased from 10 to 20 percent, and the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students increased from 3 to 5 percent.

White – Hispanic gap narrows

The 23-point gap in civics scores in 2010 between White and Hispanic students was narrower than the gaps in both 2006 and 1998 (figure 14). The 25-point gap between White and Black students in 2010 was not statistically different from the score gap in either 2006 or 1998.

Figure 14. Trend in eighth-grade NAEP civics average scores and score gaps, by selected racial/ethnic groups



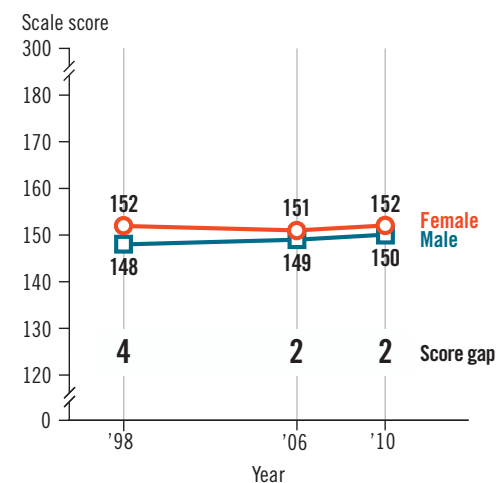
* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.

No significant difference between male and female student performance

The average scores for male and female students did not differ significantly from each other in 2010 (figure 15). There was no significant change in the score for either male or female students in comparison to earlier assessment years.

Figure 15. Trend in eighth-grade NAEP civics average scores and score gaps, by gender



NOTE: Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.



Additional Results for Student Groups

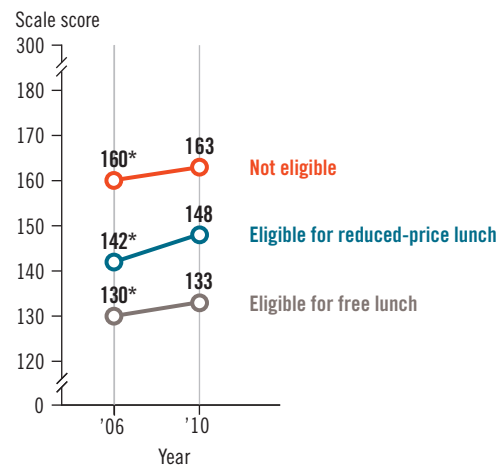
Achievement-level results and percentile scores provide additional insight into the performance of student groups. See appendix tables A-6 and A-7 for additional eighth-grade results for the student groups highlighted in this section. Similar NAEP results for other student groups can be found in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

Scores increase across income levels

Average civics scores were higher in 2010 than in 2006 for eighth-graders who were eligible for free lunch and for reduced-price lunch, and for students who were not eligible (figure 16). Increases for all three groups, however, did not result in a significant increase in the overall average score at grade 8. Such a pattern results from an increase from 2006 to 2010 only in the percentage of students eligible for free lunch, and these students typically score lower on average than students in other family income levels.

In 2010, eighth-graders who were not eligible scored 15 points higher on average than those eligible for reduced-price lunch, who in turn scored 15 points higher than those eligible for free lunch.

Figure 16. Average scores in eighth-grade NAEP civics, by eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch: 2006 and 2010



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

Table 6. Percentage of students assessed in eighth-grade NAEP civics, by eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch: 2006 and 2010

Eligibility for school lunch	2006	2010
Eligible for free lunch	31*	36
Eligible for reduced-price lunch	7	7
Not eligible	55	52
Information not available	7	6

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Percentage of students eligible for free school lunch increases

The percentage of students eligible for free school lunch increased from 31 percent in 2006 to 36 percent in 2010 (table 6). There were no other significant changes in the percentages of students based on their eligibility for the school lunch program.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 and 2010 Civics Assessments.

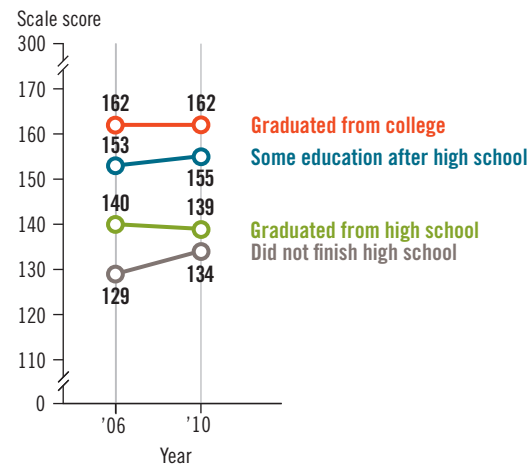


Higher levels of parental education associated with higher scores

Eighth-graders were asked to report the highest level of education completed by each parent. Five response options—did not finish high school, graduated from high school, some education after high school, graduated from college, and “I don’t know”—were offered. Results are reported for the highest level of education for either parent. Because the wording of the question was different in 1998, results are only reported for 2006 and 2010.

Scores in 2010 were higher for students who reported higher levels of parental education than for those who reported lower levels (figure 17). For example, students whose parents graduated from college scored higher on average than those whose parents had some education after high school, who in turn scored higher than those whose parents’ highest level of education was high school. There were no significant changes from 2006 to 2010 in the average scores for students reporting different levels of parental education.

Figure 17. Average scores in eighth-grade NAEP civics, by highest level of parental education: 2006 and 2010



NOTE: Results are not shown for students who reported that they did not know the highest education level for either of their parents.

Table 7. Percentage of students assessed in eighth-grade NAEP civics, by highest level of parental education: 2006 and 2010

Parental education level	2006	2010
Did not finish high school	8	7
Graduated from high school	18	17
Some education after high school	17	16
Graduated from college	47	49
Don't know	10	10

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

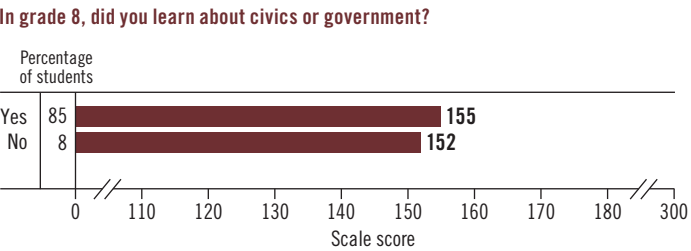
About one-half of eighth-graders report parents completed college

In 2010, forty-nine percent of eighth-graders reported at least one parent graduated from college (table 7). There were no significant changes from 2006 to 2010 in the percentages of students who reported different levels of parental education.

Majority of students study civics in grade 8

As part of the student questionnaire, students were asked if they learned about civics in eighth grade. Students responded either “yes,” “no,” or “I don’t know.” Eighty-five percent of students reported learning about civics in eighth grade in 2010 (figure 18). There was no significant difference in the average scores in 2010 for students who reported that they did study civics and those who reported they did not.

Figure 18. Percentage of students and average scores in eighth-grade NAEP civics, by students’ responses to a question about whether or not they learned about civics or government in eighth grade: 2010



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because results are not shown for students whose response to the question was “I don’t know.”

Students were also asked if they studied certain topics specifically related to civics during the school year. In 2010, more than one-half of students reported studying seven of the nine topics presented, including: the congress; the president and the cabinet; state and local government; the U.S. Constitution; the court system; how laws are made; and political parties, elections, and voting (table 8). Less than one-half reported studying international organizations and other countries’ governments in 2010.

Because the same question was asked of eighth-graders assessed in 1998 and 2006, the percentages can be compared over time. The percentage of students who reported studying international organizations in 2010 was higher than the percentage in 2006 but was not significantly different from the percentage in 1998. The percentages of students who studied the president and cabinet, court system, and political parties did not change significantly from 2006 to 2010 but were higher in 2010 than in 1998.

Table 8. Percentage of students assessed in eighth-grade NAEP civics, by student-reported civics topics studied during the school year: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Civics topics studied during the school year	1998	2006	2010
U.S. Constitution	79	82	82
Congress	75	78	78
President and cabinet	55*	60	62
How laws are made	67	69	70
Court system	60*	64	64
Political parties, elections, and voting	69*	74	75
State and local government	67	68	70
Other countries’ governments	40	39	40
International organizations (such as the United Nations)	33	29*	33

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

Explore Additional Results

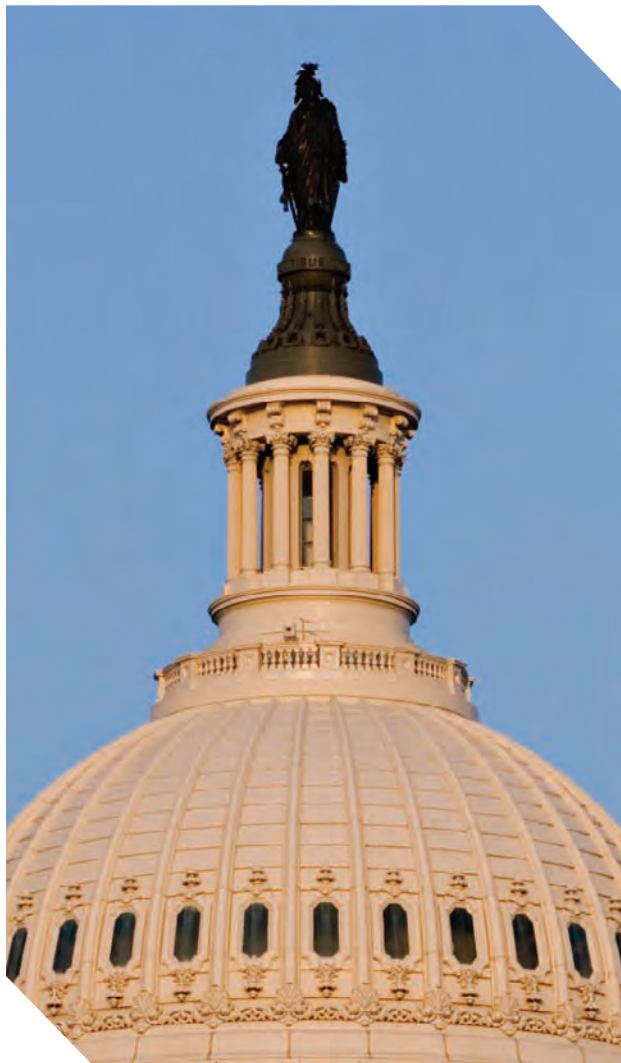
Results for other background questions from the eighth-grade student, teacher, and school questionnaires are available in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Assessment Content at Grade 8

The distribution of questions among the five knowledge components reflects the different developmental emphases across grade levels as specified in the civics framework.

The 152 questions that made up the entire eighth-grade assessment were divided into eight sections, each containing a mixture of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. Each student responded to questions in two 25-minute sections.



Knowledge Components

15% What are civic life, politics, and government?

These questions focus on understanding why government and politics are necessary and what purpose they serve, the fundamental nature of constitutions, and identifying alternative ways of organizing governments.

25% What are the foundations of the American political system?

These questions focus on students' understanding of American constitutional government and distinctive characteristics of American society and American political culture (e.g., religious freedom, individualism).

25% How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

These questions focus on understanding the major responsibilities and organization of the national government, the role and function of state and local governments, and the role of the law in the American constitutional system.

15% What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?

These questions focus on understanding how the world is organized politically and how nations influence one another in world affairs.

20% What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

These questions focus on the meaning of citizenship and ask students to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the fundamental rights and responsibilities of citizens. Questions in this area also explore the relationship between civic participation and the preservation and improvement of American democracy.

Civics Achievement-Level Descriptions for Grade 8

NAEP civics achievement-level descriptions outline certain expectations of student performance. The specific descriptions of what eighth-graders should know and be able to do at the *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* levels in civics are presented below. NAEP achievement levels are cumulative; therefore, student performance at the *Proficient* level includes the competencies associated with the *Basic* level, and the *Advanced* level includes the skills and knowledge associated with both the *Basic* and the *Proficient* levels. The cut score indicating the lower end of the score range for each level is noted in the parentheses.

Basic (134)

Eighth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should have some understanding of competing ideas about purposes of government, and they should be able to describe advantages of limited government. They should be able to define what is meant by government, constitution, the rule of law, and politics. These students should be able to identify fundamental principles and values of American democracy, such as federalism, the separation of powers, checks and balances, government by the consent of the governed, and individual rights. They should understand that the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights and other amendments, are sources of these ideas. These students should be able to explain why it is important that citizens share the values and principles expressed in the nation's core documents, and they should understand functions of elections, political parties, and interest groups in a democratic society. They should know that American citizenship is attained by birth or through naturalization. They should be able to identify personal, political, and economic rights of Americans and should understand the responsibilities that these rights imply. Finally, these students should be able to describe purposes of international organizations to which the United States belongs.

Proficient (178)

Eighth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should have a good understanding of purposes that government should serve, and they should be able to explain why government should serve those purposes. These students should understand differences between government and civil society, and they should be able to explain the importance of the rule of law. They should be able to point out ways in which ideals expressed in the nation's core documents differ from reality and identify ways in which these differences continue to be addressed. They should be able to explain how and why legislative, executive, and judicial powers are separate, shared, and limited in the American constitutional government, and they should understand how and why powers are divided and shared between the national and state governments. They should be able to discuss ways that citizens can use the political process to influence government. These students should be able to provide simple interpretations of nontext-based information such as maps, charts, tables, graphs, and cartoons. Finally, these students should be able to describe events in the United States that have influenced other nations, as well as events in other nations that have affected American policy.

Advanced (213)

Eighth-grade students performing at the *Advanced* level should have a developed understanding of why civil society plays a key role in maintaining a limited government and the importance of the rule of law in civil society and government. These students should be able to take positions on issues in which fundamental values are in conflict (liberty and equality, individual rights and the common good, and majority rule and minority rights, for example) and they should be able to defend their positions. They should be able to evaluate results of past efforts to address discrepancies between American ideals and national reality and to explain how citizens can monitor and influence local, state, and national government. These students should understand how laws can achieve purposes of American constitutional government, such as promoting the common good and protecting rights of individuals. They should understand how civic dispositions such as civility, tolerance, and respect for law promote the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy. Finally, these students should understand the impact of American democracy on other countries, as well as the impact of other countries on American politics and society.

What Eighth-Graders Know and Can Do in Civics

The item map below illustrates the range of civics knowledge demonstrated by eighth-graders. The scale scores on the left represent the scores for students who were likely to get the items correct or complete. The cut score at the low end of the range for each achievement level is boxed. The descriptions of selected assessment questions indicating what students need to do to answer the question correctly are listed on the right.

For example, the map on this page shows that eighth-graders performing at the *Basic* level with a score of 158 were likely to be able to identify purposes of specific nongovernmental organizations. Students performing at the *Proficient* level with a score of 198 were likely to be able to recognize a role performed by the Supreme Court. Students at the *Advanced* level with a score of 249 were likely to be able to name two actions citizens can take to encourage Congress to pass a law.

GRADE 8 NAEP CIVICS ITEM MAP

Scale score	Question description
300	
//	
Advanced	
292	Analyze a graph showing voting participation over time and suggest ways to improve it
266	<i>Identify a limit on the power of the United Nations</i>
249	Name two actions citizens can take to encourage Congress to pass a law
240	Give two examples of how the media influences politics and democracy
230	Fill in the chart to show checks on powers of branches of government (shown on pages 32 and 33)
213	
Proficient	
212	<i>Identify a reason to join a political party</i>
205	Give two examples of the effects of the women's rights movement
198	<i>Recognize a role performed by the Supreme Court</i>
193	<i>Identify an action the U.S. can do to influence other countries in a foreign policy issue</i>
191	<i>Analyze text and explain George Washington's concern about government</i>
186	<i>Understand impeachment of the President</i>
183	<i>Analyze the message in a political cartoon (shown on page 31)</i>
183	<i>Recognize that leaders in power benefit from unlimited government</i>
178	
Basic	
175	<i>Understand how state governments are established</i>
172	<i>Interpret a graph to draw an inference about voting behavior</i>
168	<i>Recognize that the U.S. Constitution proclaims that government is based on the people's consent</i>
168	<i>Identify the type of government from the description of its characteristics</i>
158	<i>Identify the purposes of specific nongovernmental organizations</i>
156	<i>Identify a reason why a poll tax violates democratic ideals</i>
144	<i>Identify a right protected by the First Amendment</i>
141	<i>Identify a cause of conflict between two countries (shown on page 30)</i>
134	
124	<i>Analyze a quotation to determine a role performed by civic associations in the U.S.</i>
121	<i>Identify types of actions taken by courts</i>
111	<i>Analyze a document to determine the role performed by government</i>
//	
0	

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question. The position of a question on the scale represents the scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of successfully answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct. Scale score ranges for civics achievement levels are referenced on the map.



Civics Knowledge Component: What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?

Which of the following would most likely cause a conflict between two countries?

- Ⓐ Raising income taxes
- Ⓑ Increasing welfare benefits
- Ⓒ Limiting the terms served by elected officials
- Ⓓ Violating an existing trade agreement

This sample question from the 2010 eighth-grade civics assessment measures students' knowledge of international relations. Seventy-seven percent of eighth-graders were able to correctly identify what would most likely cause a conflict between two countries.

Percentage of eighth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D	Omitted
12	5	5	77	#

Rounds to zero.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The table below shows the percentage of eighth-graders within each achievement level who answered this question correctly. For example, 84 percent of eighth-graders at the *Basic* level selected the correct answer choice.

Percentage of eighth-grade students responding correctly at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
77	45	84	98	‡

‡: Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2010 Civics Assessment.



Civics Knowledge Component: What are civic life, politics, and government?



© Tribune Media Services Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Used with permission

The main message of the cartoon is that

- Ⓐ there should be less federal regulation of small businesses
- Ⓑ small businesses should merge into corporations to have more power
- Ⓒ small businesses rely too much on government money
- Ⓓ poor urban planning makes small businesses fail

This sample question measures students' ability to analyze a political cartoon. Fifty-two percent of eighth-graders were able to correctly identify the main message of the political cartoon.

Percentage of eighth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D	Omitted
52	14	19	14	#

Rounds to zero.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The table below shows the percentage of eighth-graders within each achievement level who answered this question correctly. For example, 49 percent of eighth-graders at the *Basic* level selected the correct answer choice.

Percentage of eighth-grade students responding correctly at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below Basic	At Basic	At Proficient	At Advanced
52	30	49	85	‡

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

Civics Knowledge Component: How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

The chart below shows how each of the three separate branches of the federal government can limit the powers of the other two. Complete the chart by filling in each of the empty boxes. The completed chart should have one power for each branch of government and one way in which that branch's power is checked by another branch.

BRANCH	POWER	HOW OTHER BRANCHES LIMIT THE POWER
Legislative	Makes laws	President can veto.
Executive	Enforces laws.	Legislative can override Presidential veto.
Judicial	Decides if laws are constitutional or not.	Judges can be impeached

BRANCH	POWER	HOW OTHER BRANCHES LIMIT THE POWER
Legislative	Makes laws	may veto laws
Executive	Approves laws	May be taken out of office
Judicial	Thinks of laws	Judges can be impeached

This constructed-response sample question (shown on the previous page) measures eighth-grade students' knowledge of the system of checks and balances in the federal government. Successful responses demonstrated knowledge of how the Constitution divides various powers among the three branches of government. Responses to this question were rated using four scoring levels. Spelling and grammar were not considered in rating responses to the question.

Complete responses provided correct information in all four parts of the chart.

Acceptable responses provided correct information in three parts of the chart.

Partial responses provided correct information in one or two parts of the chart.

Unacceptable responses did not provide correct information in any part of the chart.

The first sample student response shown on the previous page was rated "Complete" because it provided correct information in all four parts of the chart. The statement "President can veto" under the category of limits of power to the legislative branch was credited because it refers to an action of the executive branch. The statement for the category of executive power, "Enforces laws," refers to a power the president has after a bill has been made into law. The statement for limits on the executive branch "Legislature can override Presidential veto" was credited as a reference to the power Congress has to reverse a presidential veto of a bill with a majority vote of two-thirds in both houses of Congress. The statement "Decides if laws are constitutional or not" for the power of the judicial branch refers to the power of the Supreme Court to rule on the constitutionality of laws that are challenged in judicial disputes. Seven percent of eighth-graders' responses to this question received a "Complete" rating.

The second sample student response was rated "Acceptable" because it provided correct information for three of the four parts of the chart. The statement "may veto laws" under the category of limits of power to the legislative branch was credited because it refers to an action of the executive branch. The statement for the category of executive power, "approves laws," was interpreted to refer to the power the president has in signing a bill. The statement for limits on the executive branch "may be taken out of office" was credited as a reference to the power Congress has to impeach the president. The response did not receive credit for the statement "thinks of laws" as a power of the judicial branch. Ten percent of eighth-graders' responses to this question received an "Acceptable" rating.

Percentage of eighth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Complete	Acceptable	Partial	Unacceptable	Omitted
7	10	43	26	12

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because the percentage of responses rated as "Off-task" is not shown. Off-task responses are those that do not provide any information related to the assessment task.

The table below shows the percentage of eighth-graders within each achievement-level interval whose responses to this question were rated as "Complete." For example, 3 percent of eighth-graders at the *Basic* level provided responses rated as "Complete."

Percentage of eighth-grade students' responses rated as "Complete" at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
7	#	3	23	‡

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2010 Civics Assessment.

GRADE 12

Twelfth-graders' performance declines since 2006

The average civics score in 2010 for the nation's twelfth-graders was lower than the score in 2006 but not significantly different from the score in 1998. Average scores decreased for female students but showed no significant change for male students. The score gap between White and Hispanic students narrowed in comparison to previous assessment years.

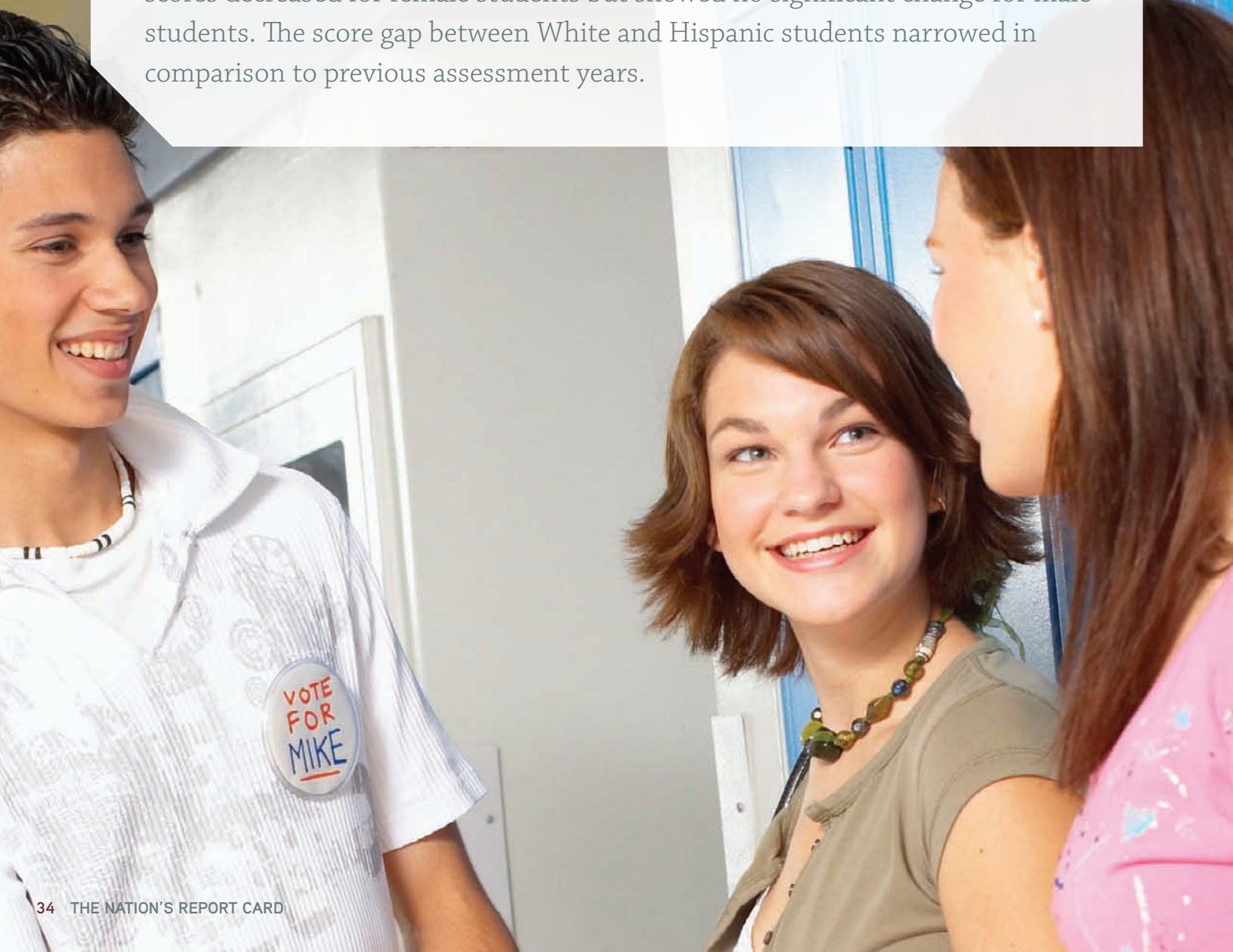
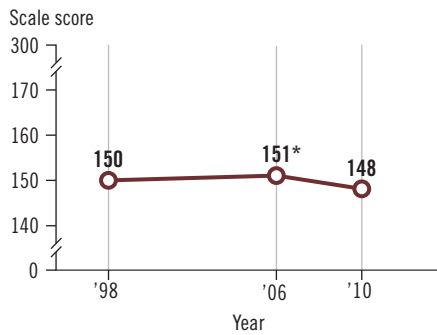
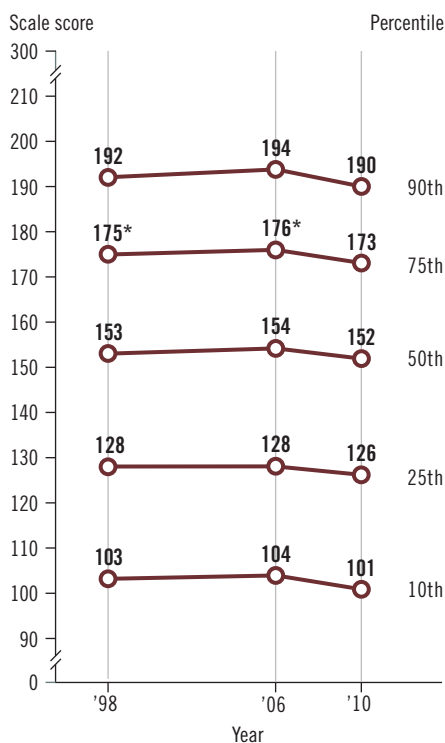


Figure 19. Trend in twelfth-grade NAEP civics average scores



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

Figure 20. Trend in twelfth-grade NAEP civics percentile scores



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

Drop in twelfth-grade score since 2006

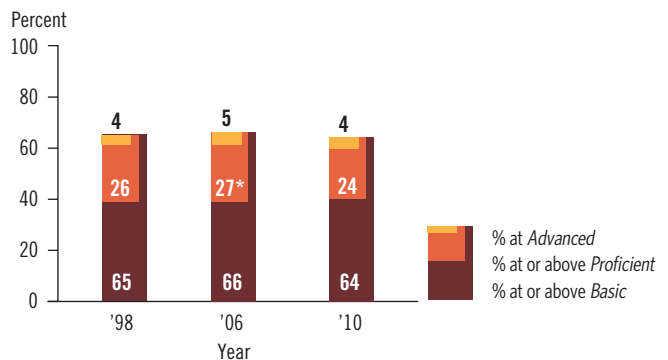
Students' performance on the NAEP civics assessment declined from 2006 to 2010 at grade 12. Although the average score for the nation's twelfth-graders in 2010 was 3 points lower than in 2006, it was not significantly different from the score in 1998 (figure 19).

Students at the 75th percentile scored lower in 2010 than in both earlier assessment years, while any apparent changes at the 10th, 25th, 50th, and 90th percentiles were not statistically significant (figure 20).

Percentage of students at or above Proficient decreases since 2006

Sixty-four percent of students performed at or above the *Basic* level in 2010, and 24 percent performed at or above the *Proficient* level (figure 21). The percentage of students at or above *Proficient* in 2010 was lower than in 2006 but not significantly different from the percentage in 1998. The percentages of students at or above *Basic* and at *Advanced* were not significantly different from the percentages in 2006 or 1998.

Figure 21. Trend in twelfth-grade NAEP civics achievement-level results



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

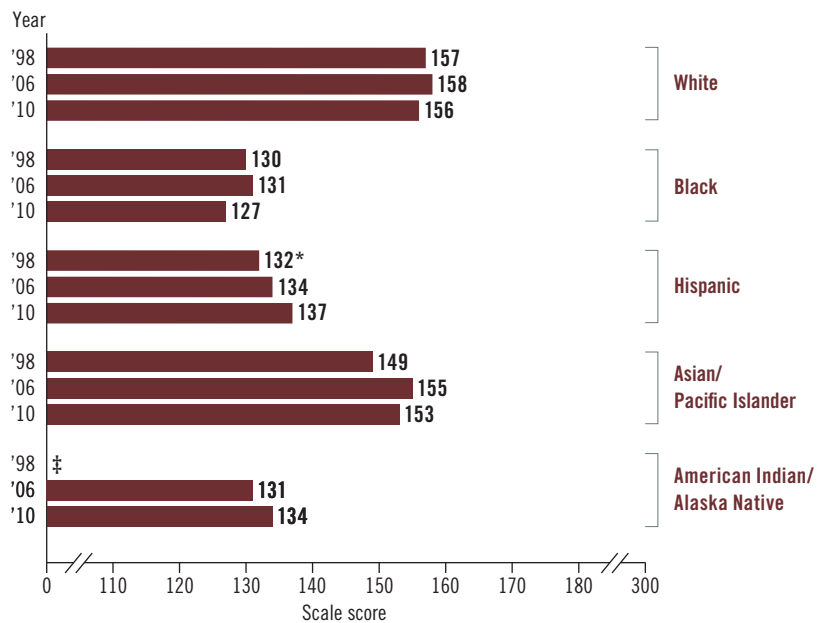


No significant change in performance of racial/ethnic groups since 2006

Although there were no significant changes in the average scores for any of the five racial/ethnic groups from 2006 to 2010, the score for Hispanic students was higher in 2010 than in 1998 ([figure 22](#)).

In 2010, both White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored higher on average than Black and Hispanic students. The average scores of White and Asian/Pacific Islander students did not differ significantly from each other.

Figure 22. Trend in twelfth-grade NAEP civics average scores, by race/ethnicity



‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

Table 9. Percentage of students assessed in twelfth-grade NAEP civics, by race/ethnicity: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Race/ethnicity	1998	2006	2010
White	72*	66	62
Black	14	13	14
Hispanic	10*	13	16
Asian/Pacific Islander	4*	6	6
American Indian/Alaska Native	#	1	1

Rounds to zero.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Detail may not sum to totals because results are not shown for students whose race/ethnicity was unclassified.

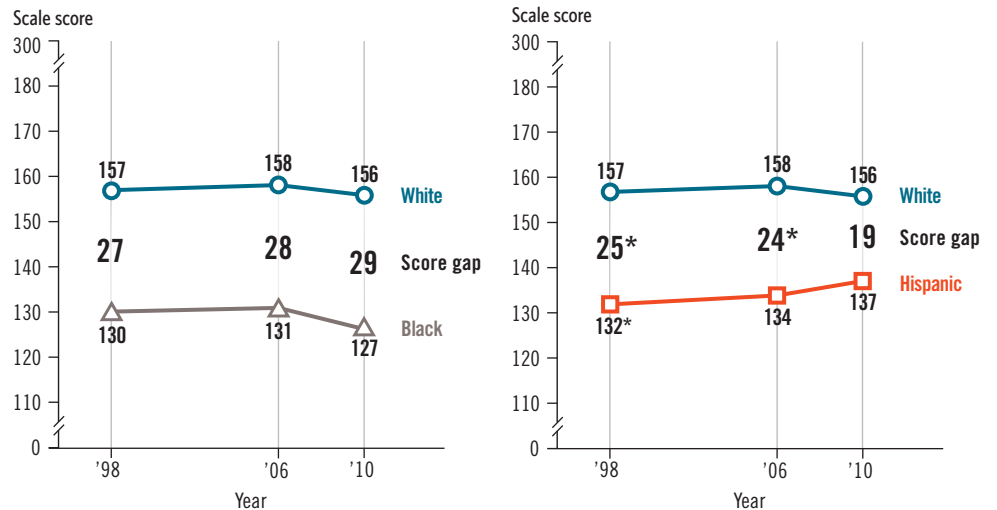
No significant change since 2006 in students' racial/ethnic composition

The proportion of twelfth-graders in each of the five racial/ethnic groups that NAEP reports on has not changed significantly since 2006 ([table 9](#)). In comparison to the first assessment in 1998, however, the percentage of White students decreased from 72 to 62 percent, the percentage of Hispanic students increased from 10 to 16 percent, and the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students increased from 4 to 6 percent.

White – Hispanic gap narrows

Although the average score for White students did not change significantly, the increase in the score for Hispanic students from 1998 to 2010 led to a narrowing of the score gap between the two groups (figure 23). The 19-point gap in civics in 2010 between White and Hispanic students was smaller than the gaps in both 2006 and 1998. The 29-point gap between White and Black students in 2010 was not statistically different from the score gap in either 2006 or 1998.

Figure 23. Trend in twelfth-grade NAEP civics average scores and score gaps, by selected racial/ethnic groups



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

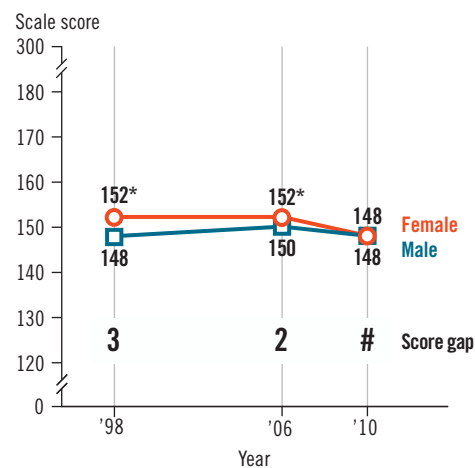
NOTE: Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.

Average score for female students declines

The average score for female students decreased 3 points² from 2006 to 2010, while there was no significant change in the score for male students over the same period (figure 24). Although not shown here, the scores for female students decreased at the 75th and 90th percentiles since 2006 (see appendix table A-9). The average scores for male and female students did not differ significantly from each other in 2010.

² The score-point difference is based on the difference between the unrounded scores as opposed to the rounded scores shown in the figure.

Figure 24. Trend in twelfth-grade NAEP civics average scores and score gaps, by gender



Rounds to zero.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores. The score differences between male and female students were not found to be statistically significant in 2006 and 2010.

Additional Results for Student Groups

Achievement-level results and percentile scores provide additional insight into the performance of student groups. See appendix tables A-8 and A-9 for additional twelfth-grade results for the student groups highlighted in this section. Similar NAEP results for other student groups can be found in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

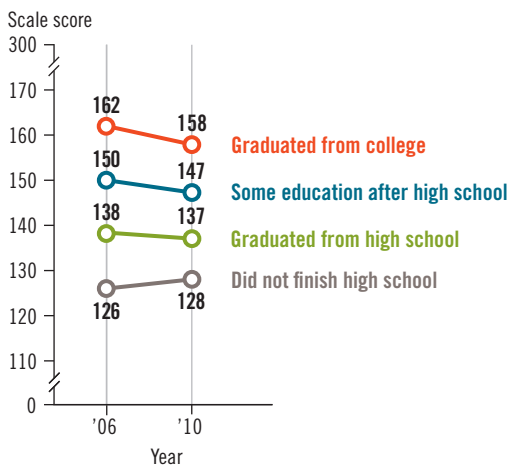
No significant changes in scores by level of parental education

There were no significant changes from 2006 to 2010 in the average scores for students reporting different levels of parental education (figure 25). Scores in 2010 were higher for students who reported higher levels of parental education than for those who reported lower levels. For example, students who reported at least one parent graduated from college scored higher on average than those whose parents had some education after high school, who in turn scored

higher than those whose parents' highest level of education was high school.

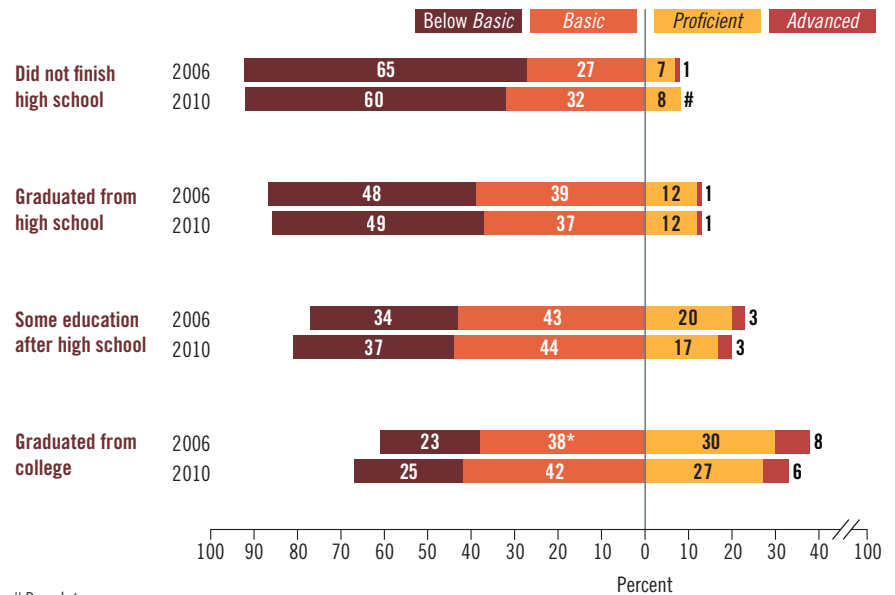
A closer look at the achievement-level results by level of parental education shows an increase in the percentage at *Basic* from 2006 to 2010 for students whose parents graduated from college (figure 26). There were no significant changes in the percentages of students below *Basic*, at *Proficient*, or at *Advanced* for any of the groups.

Figure 25. Average scores in twelfth-grade NAEP civics, by highest level of parental education: 2006 and 2010



NOTE: Results are not shown for students who reported that they did not know the highest education level for either of their parents.

Figure 26. Achievement-level results in twelfth-grade NAEP civics, by highest level of parental education: 2006 and 2010



Rounds to zero.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Results are not shown for students who reported that they did not know the highest education level for either of their parents. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Table 10. Percentage of students assessed in twelfth-grade NAEP civics, by highest level of parental education: 2006 and 2010

Parental education level	2006	2010
Did not finish high school	7	8
Graduated from high school	19	18
Some education after high school	22	23
Graduated from college	49	49
Don't know	2	3

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

About one-half of twelfth-graders report parents completed college

In 2010, forty-nine percent of twelfth-graders reported at least one parent graduated from college (table 10). There were no significant changes from 2006 to 2010 in the percentages of students who reported different levels of parental education.

Almost all twelfth-graders study civics in high school

As part of the twelfth-grade student questionnaire, students were asked to indicate whether or not they studied civics or government in high school (grades 9, 10, 11, and 12). Ninety-seven percent of students reported studying civics or government in high school (figure 27). Students who reported studying civics or government in at least one of the four grades scored 15 points³ higher on average than students who did not.

³ The score-point difference is based on the difference between the unrounded scores as opposed to the rounded scores shown in the figure.

Figure 27. Percentage of students and average scores in twelfth-grade NAEP civics, by students' responses to a question about whether or not they studied civics or government in high school: 2010

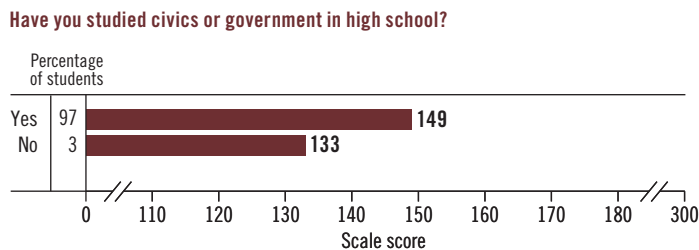


Table 11. Percentage of students assessed in twelfth-grade NAEP civics, by student-reported civics topics studied during the school year: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Civics topics studied during the school year	1998	2006	2010
U.S. Constitution	71	72*	67
Congress	71	69	66
President and cabinet	63*	61	59
How laws are made	64	64	61
Court system	64	63	61
Political parties, elections, and voting	70	70	68
State and local government	69	69	68
Other countries' governments	48	46	47
International organizations (such as the United Nations)	45	43	43

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.



Percentage of students studying the U.S. Constitution decreases since 2006

Students were also asked if they studied certain topics specifically related to civics during the school year. Students responded either "yes," "no," or "I don't know." In 2010, more than one-half of students reported studying seven of the nine topics presented, including: the congress; the president and the cabinet; state and local government; the U.S. Constitution; the court system; how laws are made; and political parties, elections, and voting (table 11). Less than one-half reported studying international organizations and other countries' governments in 2010.

Because the same question was asked of twelfth-graders assessed in 1998 and 2006, the percentages can be compared over time. The percentage of students who reported studying the president and cabinet did not change significantly from 2006 to 2010 but was lower in 2010 than in 1998. The percentage of students who reported studying the U.S. Constitution in 2010 was lower than the percentage in 2006 but was not significantly different from the percentage in 1998.

Explore Additional Results

Results for other background questions from the twelfth-grade student and school questionnaires are available in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Assessment Content at Grade 12

Each question in the NAEP civics assessment measures students' civic knowledge in one of five areas. Guidelines for the proportion of the assessment covering each area are provided in the framework for each grade assessed.

The 153 questions that made up the entire twelfth-grade assessment were divided into eight sections, each containing a mixture of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. Each student responded to questions in two 25-minute sections.



Knowledge Components

10% What are civic life, politics, and government?

These questions focus on understanding why government and politics are necessary and articulating what purpose they serve, the nature and purpose of constitutions, and understanding alternative ways constitutional governments function.

20% What are the foundations of the American political system?

These questions focus on students' understanding of American constitutional government and its history as well as the distinctive characteristics of American society and American political culture (e.g., religious freedom, individualism) that are linked to American constitutional democracy.

25% How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

These questions focus on understanding the specific responsibilities and organization of the national government, the role and function of state and local governments, and the role of the law in the American constitutional system.

20% What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?

These questions focus on understanding how the world is organized politically and nations influence one another in world affairs. The questions focus on understanding specific, historical, and contemporary foreign policy decisions.

25% What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

These questions focus on the meaning of citizenship and ask students to evaluate, take, and defend positions on specific rights and responsibilities of citizens. Questions in this area also explore the complexity of the relationship between civic participation and the preservation and improvement of American democracy.

Civics Achievement-Level Descriptions for Grade 12

NAEP civics achievement-level descriptions outline the expectations for student performance at each grade. The specific descriptions of what twelfth-graders should know and be able to do at the *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* levels in civics are presented below. NAEP achievement levels are cumulative; therefore, student performance at the *Proficient* level includes the competencies associated with the *Basic* level, and the *Advanced* level includes the skills and knowledge associated with both the *Basic* and the *Proficient* levels. The cut score indicating the lower end of the score range for each level is noted in the parentheses.

Basic (139)

Twelfth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should have an understanding of what is meant by civil society, constitutional government, and politics. They should know that constitutional governments can take different forms, and they should understand the fundamental principles of American constitutional government. These students should be able to explain ways that political parties, interest groups, and the media contribute to elections, and they should be able to point out sources of information about public policy issues. They should understand that both power and rights must be limited in a free society. They should be able to identify those traits that make people responsible citizens, and they should be able to describe forms of political participation available in a democracy and recognize reasons that such participation is important. These students should be able to provide simple interpretations of nontext-based information such as maps, charts, tables, graphs, and cartoons. Finally, they should be familiar with international issues that affect the United States.

Proficient (174)

Twelfth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should have a good understanding of how constitutions can limit the power of government and support the rule of law. They should be able to distinguish between parliamentary systems of government and those based on separate and shared powers, and they should be able to describe the structure and functions of American government. These students should be able to identify issues in which fundamental democratic values and principles are in conflict—liberty and equality, individual rights and the common good, and majority rule and minority rights, for example—and they should be able to take and defend positions on these issues. They should be able to evaluate ways that law protects individual rights and promotes the common good in American society. They should understand how the application of fundamental principles of American constitutional democracy has expanded participation in public life, and they should be able to explain how citizens can work individually and collectively to monitor and influence public policy. These students should understand the importance and means of participation in political life at the national, state, and local levels. They should be able to evaluate contributions made by political parties, interest groups, and the media to the development of public policy, and they should be able to explain how public service and political leadership contribute to American democracy. They should understand how American foreign policy is made and carried out, and they should be able to evaluate the performance of major international organizations. Finally, these students should be able to discuss reasons for and consequences of conflicts that arise when international disputes cannot be resolved peacefully.

Advanced (204)

Twelfth-grade students performing at the *Advanced* level should have a thorough and mature understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of various forms of constitutional democracy. They should be able to discuss advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems of government, as well as strengths and weaknesses of parliamentary systems of government when compared with those based on separate and shared powers. These students should be able to explain how the structure of American government and the nation's social and political cultures serve one another. They should know which level and agency of government to contact to express their opinions or influence public policy. They should be able to explain and evaluate past and present individual and collective political actions aimed at narrowing the gap between American ideals and national reality. They should understand how elections help determine public policies, and they should be able to evaluate public policy issues in which fundamental values and principles are in conflict—liberty and equality, individual rights and the common good, and majority rule and minority rights, for example. These students should be able to evaluate the validity and emotional appeal of past and present political communication. They should be able to explain how civic dispositions such as civility, tolerance, and respect for law are important for preserving democracy, and they should be able to evaluate the many forms of participation in public affairs. Finally, they should be able to explain how American foreign policy is made and carried out and evaluate its consequences.

What Twelfth-Graders Know and Can Do in Civics

The item map below illustrates the range of civics knowledge demonstrated by twelfth-graders. The scale scores on the left represent the scores for students who were likely to get the items correct or complete. The cut score at the low end of the range for each achievement level is boxed. The descriptions of selected assessment questions indicating what students need to do to answer the question correctly are listed on the right.

For example, the map on this page shows that twelfth-graders performing at the *Basic* level with a score of 169 were likely to be able to identify the meaning of an excerpt from the Fourteenth Amendment. Students performing at the *Proficient* level with a score of 196 were likely to be able to identify an argument used by critics of the Articles of Confederation. Students at the *Advanced* level with a score of 212 were likely to be able to explain the impact of television on the political process.

GRADE 12 NAEP CIVICS ITEM MAP

Scale score	Question description
300	
//	
Advanced	
270	List two privileges of U.S. citizens
217	Compare the citizenship requirements of the U.S. to other countries
212	Explain the impact of television on the political process (shown on page 46)
211	Summarize the views of Roosevelt and Reagan on the role of government
209	Identify how the federal system encourages the growth of interest groups
204	
Proficient	
203	Identify a trait of constitutional democracy
196	Identify an argument used by critics of the Articles of Confederation
189	Identify a potential problem with the War Powers Act
187	Identify the effect of U.S. foreign policy on other nations
185	Define the term "melting pot" and argue if it applies to the U.S. (shown on pages 44 and 45)
182	Interpret the message in a poster from World War II
176	Identify a power granted to Congress by the Constitution
174	Identify an important difference between international and domestic politics
174	
Basic	
169	Identify the meaning of an excerpt from the Fourteenth Amendment
169	Identify an argument made in the Supreme Court decision in the <i>Schenck v. U.S.</i> case (shown on page 43)
167	Identify an argument made in the Supreme Court decision in the <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> case
161	Interpret a political cartoon
158	Identify the government as the source of the poster from World War II
156	Identify the constitutional issue in a Supreme Court case
151	Identify an activity that is a part of civic life
141	Identify the meaning of a Supreme Court opinion
139	
134	Support an opinion on the ethical dilemma facing a politician
110	Identify the meaning of a historical document
//	
0	

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question. The position of a question on the scale represents the scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of successfully answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct. Scale score ranges for civics achievement levels are referenced on the map.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2010 Civics Assessment.

Civics Knowledge Component: What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

The paragraph below is about the Supreme Court case of *Schenck v. The United States* (1919). In this case, Schenck was prosecuted for having violated the Espionage Act of 1917 by publishing and distributing leaflets that opposed the military draft and United States entry into the First World War. The court ruled in favor of the United States. Below is an excerpt from the majority opinion.

We admit that in . . . ordinary times the defendants . . . would have been within their constitutional rights. But the character of every act depends upon the circumstances in which it is done. The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the evils that Congress has a right to prevent.

What argument is the Supreme Court making in this decision?

- ☐ A Congress can limit free speech as it sees fit.
- ☐ B The right to free speech is basic to democracy and government may never limit it.
- ☒ C Rights are not absolute and the government may limit them in times of crisis.
- ☐ D The judiciary is powerless to overturn laws like the Espionage Act of 1917.

This sample question from the 2010 twelfth-grade civics assessment measures students' knowledge of issues related to limitations on political rights. Sixty-one percent of twelfth-graders were able to correctly identify the argument the Supreme Court used in making its decision about the protection of free speech.

Percentage of twelfth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D	Omitted
24	11	61	4	#

Rounds to zero.

The table below shows the percentage of twelfth-graders within each achievement level who answered this question correctly. For example, 65 percent of twelfth-graders at the *Basic* level selected the correct answer choice.

Percentage of twelfth-grade students responding correctly at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below Basic	At Basic	At Proficient	At Advanced
61	36	65	87	93

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2010 Civics Assessment.



Civics Knowledge Component: What are the foundations of the American political system?

Refer to the passage below.

America is . . . the great Melting Pot! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers . . . Into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.

— Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot*, 1908

COMPLETE RESPONSE:

Define what is meant by the term “melting pot” as it is used in the Zangwill quotation.

America was often referred to as the “melting pot.” The meaning is that many different cultures live here, and will meld together in harmony.

Do you think that the term “melting pot” is appropriate to describe the United States? Give one reason to support your answer.

I do not believe “melting pot” is an appropriate term. Though there are many cultures and beliefs here now, we have not all blended together to become one. We are still diverse and different.



This constructed-response question (shown on the previous page) measures twelfth-graders' knowledge of issues related to diversity in American life. Successful responses demonstrated an understanding of terms related to immigration and assimilation in the United States and an ability to support opinions about immigration with information relevant to American society. Responses to this question were rated using three scoring levels. Spelling and grammar were not considered in rating responses to the question.

Complete responses provided a definition of the meaning of the term “melting pot” and offered a clear, supported argument either for or against the appropriateness of the term to describe the United States. Credit was given for arguments for the appropriateness of the term that included examples such as the development of shared values or a common language among Americans. Credit was given for arguments against the appropriateness of the term that included examples such as the maintenance of distinct identities or distinct examples of culture by various groups.

Partial responses either provided a definition of the meaning of the term “melting pot,” or offered a clear, supported argument either for or against the appropriateness of the term to describe the United States, but not both.

Unacceptable responses provided no definition of the meaning of the term “melting pot” and did not offer a clear argument either for or against the appropriateness of the term to describe the United States.

The sample student response shown on the previous page was rated “Complete” because it provided a clear definition of the term “melting pot” and provided support for an opinion on why the term “melting pot” is not appropriate to describe the United States. Thirty-five percent of twelfth-graders' responses to this question received a “Complete” rating.

Percentage of twelfth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Complete	Partial	Unacceptable	Omitted
35	28	29	7

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because the percentage of responses rated as “Off-task” is not shown. Off-task responses are those that do not provide any information related to the assessment task.

The table below shows the percentage of twelfth-graders within each achievement-level interval whose responses to this question were rated as “Complete.” For example, 41 percent of twelfth-graders at the *Basic* level provided responses rated as “Complete.”

Percentage of twelfth-grade students' responses rated as “Complete” at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Basic</i>	At <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
35	9	41	66	79

Civics Knowledge Component: How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

Television has powerfully influenced the political process. In the space below, give one positive and one negative impact that television has on the political process.

Positive impact:

People are able to watch debates, etc. to be more informed on candidates' stances on major issues

Negative impact:

Often, because they will be viewed by a mass audience, candidates become more concerned with looking and sounding good than with presenting views and ideas

The sample student response to the left was rated as "Complete" because it provided both a positive impact and a negative impact on the political process. Twenty-seven percent of responses to this question received a "Complete" rating.

Percentage of twelfth-grade students in each response category: 2010

Complete	Partial	Unacceptable	Omitted
27	38	31	3

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The table below shows the percentage of twelfth-graders within each achievement level whose responses to this question were rated as "Complete." For example, 28 percent of twelfth-graders at the *Basic* level provided responses rated as "Complete."

Percentage of twelfth-grade students' responses rated as "Complete" at each achievement level: 2010

Overall	Below Basic	At Basic	At Proficient	At Advanced
27	8	28	52	74

This sample question measures students' knowledge of the impact television has on the political process. Responses to this question were rated using three scoring levels. Spelling and grammar were not considered in rating responses to this question.

Complete responses provided both a positive and a negative impact of television on the political process. Examples of a positive impact that were credited included responses that discussed how television provides voters with access to information about political candidates. Examples of a negative impact that were credited included the fact that television coverage of the candidates can often emphasize the public images of candidates more than their position on the issues, and the tendency of television reports to provide shorter bits of information rather than in-depth coverage of candidates' political positions.

Partial responses provided either a positive impact or a negative impact of television, but not both.

Unacceptable responses did not provide either a positive or a negative impact of television on the political process.



Technical Notes

Sampling and Weighting

The schools and students participating in NAEP assessments are selected to be representative of all schools nationally. The results from the assessed students are combined to provide accurate estimates of the overall performance of students in both public and nonpublic schools in the nation. More information on sampling can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nathow.asp>.

Because each school that participated in the assessment, and each student assessed, represents a portion of the population of interest, the results are weighted to account for the disproportionate representation of the selected sample. This includes oversampling of schools with high concentrations of students from certain racial/ethnic groups and the lower sampling rates of students who attend very small nonpublic schools.

School and Student Participation

To ensure unbiased samples, NAEP statistical standards require that participation rates for original school samples be 70 percent or higher to report national results separately for public and private schools. In instances where participation

rates meet the 70 percent criterion but fall below 85 percent, a nonresponse bias analysis is conducted to determine if the responding sample is not representative of the population, thereby introducing the potential for nonresponse bias. The numbers of participating schools and students along with the weighted participation rates for the 2010 civics assessment are presented in **table TN-1**. Participation rate standards were not met for private schools at grades 4 and 12; therefore, results for private schools are not reported separately at those grades.

Nonresponse bias analyses were conducted for the private school samples at all three grades. The results of these analyses showed that, while the original responding school samples may not have been fully representative, including substitute schools and adjusting the sampling weights to account for school nonresponse were at least partially effective in reducing the potential for nonresponse bias. After accounting for the mitigating effects of substitution and nonresponse weight adjustments, some variables examined in the analysis still indicated potential bias. At grade 4, the final private school sample consisted of smaller schools than would have been realized in the full sample, as evidenced by a smaller mean for a measure of the schools' grade 4 enrollment (28 in the responding sample compared to a full sample

Table TN-1. School and student participation rates in NAEP civics, by grade and type of school: 2010

Grade and type of school	School participation		Student participation	
	Student-weighted percent	Number of schools participating	Student-weighted percent	Number of students assessed
Grade 4				
Nation	96	540	95	7,100
Public	99	450	95	6,600
Private	65	90	94	500
Grade 8				
Nation	97	470	93	9,600
Public	99	390	92	8,800
Private	80	80	96	900
Grade 12				
Nation	89	460	83	9,900
Public	92	410	83	8,800
Private	62	60	90	1,100

NOTE: The number of schools is rounded to the nearest ten. The number of students is rounded to the nearest hundred. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

mean of 32). At grade 8, a remaining potential bias was that schools in the Midwest were somewhat overrepresented in the final sample of grade 8 private schools (32 percent in the responding sample compared to 29 percent in the full sample) and Northeast schools were somewhat underrepresented (16 percent, compared to 21 percent in the full sample). At grade 12, the application of nonresponse weight adjustments actually increased the potential bias with respect to census region and estimated grade enrollment, suggesting that there remains a significant potential for nonresponse bias for grade 12 private schools. The findings are related to the low response rate (62 percent) and the fact that, with limited school sample sizes in private schools, it is not possible to make adjustments that account fully for all school characteristics. For instance, it was larger non-Catholic private schools that did not respond, and so adjustments made to address the underrepresentation of those schools resulted in overrepresenting small schools at the expense of larger ones (a mean estimated grade enrollment of 44 in the responding sample compared to a full sample mean of 52).

An analysis was also performed to examine the potential for nonresponse bias introduced through student nonresponse in grade 12 public schools, where the weighted student response rate was 83 percent. The analysis showed that the sample of responding students differed from the original student sample with respect to relative age and student disability status. After adjusting the sampling weights to account for student nonresponse, there was no evidence of substantial bias, with the nonresponse-adjusted estimates for four variables—relative age, student disability (SD) status, English language learner (ELL) status, and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch—differing from the unadjusted estimates by 1 percent or less.

Interpreting Statistical Significance

Comparisons over time or between groups are based on statistical tests that consider both the size of the differences and the standard errors of the two statistics being compared. Standard errors are margins of error, and estimates based on smaller groups are likely to have larger margins of error. The size of the standard errors may also be influenced by other factors such as how representative the assessed students are of the entire population.

When an estimate has a large standard error, a numerical difference that seems large may not be statistically significant. Differences of the same magnitude may or may not be statistically significant depending upon the size of the standard errors of the estimates. For example, a 5-point change in the average score for Hispanic eighth-graders

may be statistically significant while a 9-point change for American Indian/Alaska Native students may not be. Standard errors for the estimates presented in this report are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

To ensure that significant differences in NAEP data reflect actual differences and not mere chance, error rates need to be controlled when making multiple simultaneous comparisons. The more comparisons that are made (e.g., comparing the performance of White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students), the higher the probability of finding significant differences by chance. In NAEP, the Benjamini-Hochberg False Discovery Rate (FDR) procedure is used to control the expected proportion of falsely rejected hypotheses relative to the number of comparisons that are conducted. A detailed explanation of this procedure can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/tdw/analysis/infer.asp>. NAEP employs a number of rules to determine the number of comparisons conducted, which in most cases is simply the number of possible statistical tests. However, there is an exception where the FDR is not applied: when comparing multiple years, the number of years does not count toward the number of comparisons.

National School Lunch Program

NAEP collects data on student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) as an indicator of low family income. Under the guidelines of NSLP, children from families with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. (For the period July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010, for a family of four, 130 percent of the poverty level was \$28,665, and 185 percent was \$40,793.) Some schools provide free meals to all students irrespective of individual eligibility, using their own funds to cover the costs of non-eligible students. Under special provisions of the National School Lunch Act intended to reduce the administrative burden of determining student eligibility every year, schools can be reimbursed based on eligibility data for a single base year. Participating schools might have high percentages of eligible students and report all students as eligible for free lunch.

Because of the improved quality of the data on students' eligibility for NSLP, the percentage of students for whom information was not available has decreased compared to the percentages reported prior to the 2006 assessment. Therefore, trend comparisons are only made back to 2006 in this report. For more information on NSLP, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/>.

Appendix Tables

Table A-1. Percentage of students with disabilities (SD) and/or English language learners (ELL) identified, excluded, and assessed in NAEP civics, as a percentage of all students, by grade and SD/ELL category: 1998, 2006, and 2010

SD/ELL category	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 12		
	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010
SD and/or ELL									
Identified	15	23	23	13	18	18	8	13	14
Excluded	5	3	2	4	2	1	2	2	2
Assessed	10	20	21	9	16	16	6	11	12
Without accommodations	6	9	8	6	6	4	5	4	3
With accommodations	3	11	13	3	10	12	1	7	9
SD									
Identified	11	13	13	11	12	12	6	10	11
Excluded	3	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2
Assessed	7	11	12	8	11	11	4	8	9
Without accommodations	4	3	2	4	2	1	3	2	1
With accommodations	3	8	9	3	9	10	1	6	8
ELL									
Identified	5	11	11	3	7	6	2	4	4
Excluded	2	1	#	1	1	#	#	1	#
Assessed	3	10	10	2	6	6	2	3	4
Without accommodations	2	7	6	2	4	3	2	2	2
With accommodations	#	3	5	#	2	3	#	1	2

Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Students identified as both SD and ELL were counted only once under the combined SD and/or ELL category, but were counted separately under the SD and ELL categories. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Table A-2. Percentage of students with disabilities (SD) and/or English language learners (ELL) identified, excluded, and assessed in NAEP civics, as a percentage of all students, by grade, selected racial/ethnic groups, and SD/ELL category: 2010

SD/ELL category	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 12		
	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic
SD and/or ELL									
Identified	14	16	49	13	17	30	11	17	21
Excluded	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	4	2
Assessed	13	14	48	12	15	28	10	14	19
Without accommodations	3	2	25	2	2	12	2	2	9
With accommodations	10	12	23	11	13	16	8	12	10
SD									
Identified	14	15	12	13	15	11	11	16	9
Excluded	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	2
Assessed	12	13	11	12	13	10	9	12	7
Without accommodations	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
With accommodations	9	11	9	10	12	9	8	11	6
ELL									
Identified	1	1	42	1	2	22	#	2	15
Excluded	#	#	1	#	#	1	#	#	1
Assessed	1	1	41	1	2	21	#	2	14
Without accommodations	#	#	24	#	1	11	#	#	8
With accommodations	1	1	17	1	1	9	#	1	6

Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Students identified as both SD and ELL were counted only once under the combined SD and/or ELL category, but were counted separately under the SD and ELL categories. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2010 Civics Assessment.

Table A-3. Percentage of students identified as students with disabilities (SD) and/or English language learners (ELL) excluded and assessed in NAEP civics, as a percentage of identified SD and/or ELL students, by grade and SD/ELL category: 2010

Grade and SD/ELL category	Percentage of identified SD and/or ELL students			
	Excluded	Assessed	Assessed without accommodations	Assessed with accommodations
Grade 4				
SD and/or ELL	7	93	35	58
SD	10	90	19	71
ELL	3	97	52	45
Grade 8				
SD and/or ELL	8	92	24	69
SD	9	91	11	80
ELL	6	94	48	46
Grade 12				
SD and/or ELL	13	87	22	64
SD	17	83	13	71
ELL	6	94	48	46

NOTE: Students identified as both SD and ELL were counted only once under the combined SD and/or ELL category, but were counted separately under the SD and ELL categories. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2010 Civics Assessment.

Table A-4. Achievement-level results for fourth-grade students in NAEP civics, by selected characteristics: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Characteristic	Percentage of students								
	At or above <i>Basic</i>			At or above <i>Proficient</i>			At <i>Advanced</i>		
	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010
Race/ethnicity									
White	78*	85	87	29*	34	37	2	2	2
Black	45*	57	62	7*	10	12	1	#	#
Hispanic	40*	55	58	6*	10	10	#	#	#
Asian/Pacific Islander	66*	75	82	20*	24	37	2	1	3
American Indian/Alaska Native	‡	38	63	‡	7	12	‡	#	#
Gender									
Male	68*	72	73	22	24	24	2	1	1
Female	70*	75*	81	23*	24*	30	1	1	2
Eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch									
Eligible for free lunch	—	54*	60	—	9	10	—	#	#
Eligible for reduced-price lunch	—	67	74	—	12	17	—	#	#
Not eligible	—	87*	90	—	36	40	—	2	3
Information not available	—	88	89	—	37	44	—	3	5

— Not available. Results for 1998 are not reported because of the improved quality of the data on students' eligibility for the school lunch program beginning in 2006.

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Table A-5. Percentile scores for fourth-grade students in NAEP civics, by selected characteristics: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Characteristic	10th percentile			25th percentile			50th percentile			75th percentile			90th percentile		
	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010
Race/ethnicity															
White	117*	128	132	140*	148	150	161*	166	168	180*	183	185	196*	198	199
Black	85*	102	105	107*	121	124	132*	141	145	153*	160	163	172*	177	180
Hispanic	74*	96	97	97*	117	119	126*	140	143	151	160	161	169*	177	177
Asian/Pacific Islander	102	114	125	126*	135	145	149*	156	168	173	176	186	189	193	200
American Indian/Alaska Native	‡	81	100	‡	101	129	‡	123	146	‡	149	162	‡	171	179
Gender															
Male	100*	109	111	127*	132	134	153	155	156	174	176	176	193	193	193
Female	105*	114	121	130*	136*	142	154*	158*	162	175*	176*	181	191	192	196
Eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch															
Eligible for free lunch	—	97	101	—	117	122	—	139*	144	—	159	162	—	175	178
Eligible for reduced-price lunch	—	108	116	—	129	135	—	149*	154	—	166	171	—	181	186
Not eligible	—	130	135	—	149	153	—	167*	171	—	184	187	—	199	200
Information not available	—	132	134	—	153	153	—	169	172	—	185	192	—	199	205

— Not available. Results for 1998 are not reported because of the improved quality of the data on students' eligibility for the school lunch program beginning in 2006.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Table A-6. Achievement-level results for eighth-grade students in NAEP civics, by selected characteristics: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Characteristic	Percentage of students								
	At or above <i>Basic</i>			At or above <i>Proficient</i>			At <i>Advanced</i>		
	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010
Race/ethnicity									
White	78*	82	82	28	30	29	2	2	2
Black	49	50	53	7	9	9	#	#	#
Hispanic	44*	50	56	7*	8	11	#	#	#
Asian/Pacific Islander	69	73	78	25	27	30	3	3	2
American Indian/Alaska Native	‡	46	56	‡	7	11	‡	#	1
Gender									
Male	67	68	70	22	23	22	2	2	1
Female	73	72	74	22	21	22	1	1	1
Eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch									
Eligible for free lunch	—	48	52	—	7	8	—	#	#
Eligible for reduced-price lunch	—	63	69	—	12	17	—	#	1
Not eligible	—	82	85	—	29	31	—	2	2
Information not available	—	90	88	—	44	35	—	5	3
Highest level of parental education									
Did not finish high school	—	47	52	—	6	6	—	#	#
Graduated from high school	—	59	60	—	11	10	—	#	#
Some education after high school	—	75	78	—	20	22	—	1	1
Graduated from college	—	82	83	—	33	32	—	3	2

— Not available. For the eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch category, results for 1998 are not reported because of the improved quality of the data on students' eligibility for the school lunch program beginning in 2006. For the highest level of parental education category, results for 1998 are not reported because the question in 1998 was different from the question in the 2006 and 2010 assessments.

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Table A-7. Percentile scores for eighth-grade students in NAEP civics, by selected characteristics: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Characteristic	10th percentile			25th percentile			50th percentile			75th percentile			90th percentile		
	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010
Race/ethnicity															
White	115*	121	121	138	143	142	161	163	163	180	182	181	196	196	195
Black	88	88	92	109	110	112	133	134	137	155	157	159	173	176	176
Hispanic	79	85	89	103*	108*	115	128*	134	139	153*	157*	162	172*	174	179
Asian/Pacific Islander	102	106	109	127	132	140	153	159	163	178	181	182	197	198	196
American Indian/Alaska Native	‡	78	89	‡	99	109	‡	129	139	‡	156	163	‡	171	179
Gender															
Male	98	98*	103	124	125	129	151	153	154	175	176	176	193	192	192
Female	108	107	108	132	130	132	155	155	156	175	174	175	191	191	191
Eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch															
Eligible for free lunch	—	85	89	—	107*	112	—	132	136	—	154	157	—	172	174
Eligible for reduced-price lunch	—	98	107	—	120*	128	—	145	150	—	166	170	—	180	187
Not eligible	—	120	124	—	142*	146	—	163	165	—	181	183	—	196	197
Information not available	—	133	129	—	155	150	—	174	168	—	190	186	—	204	199
Highest level of parental education															
Did not finish high school	—	87	92	—	107	113	—	131	136	—	153	157	—	169	171
Graduated from high school	—	96	96	—	118	119	—	142	142	—	164	162	—	180	178
Some education after high school	—	112	116	—	134	137	—	156	158	—	173	175	—	189	189
Graduated from college	—	118	121	—	143	144	—	165	166	—	184	184	—	198	198

— Not available. For the eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch category, results for 1998 are not reported because of the improved quality of the data on students' eligibility for the school lunch program beginning in 2006.

For the highest level of parental education category, results for 1998 are not reported because the question in 1998 was different from the question in the 2006 and 2010 assessments.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Table A-8. Achievement-level results for twelfth-grade students in NAEP civics, by selected characteristics: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Characteristic	Percentage of students								
	At or above <i>Basic</i>			At or above <i>Proficient</i>			At <i>Advanced</i>		
	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010
Race/ethnicity									
White	73	74	73	32	34	30	5	6	5
Black	41	42	38	9	9	8	1	1	1
Hispanic	45	46	50	10	12	13	1	1	2
Asian/Pacific Islander	63	68	70	27	33	29	5	8	5
American Indian/Alaska Native	‡	42	47	‡	9	16	‡	#	1
Gender									
Male	62	64	63	27	28*	25	5	5	5
Female	68	67	64	26	26*	22	3	4	3
Highest level of parental education									
Did not finish high school	—	35	40	—	8	8	—	1	#
Graduated from high school	—	52	51	—	13	13	—	1	1
Some education after high school	—	66	63	—	23	20	—	3	3
Graduated from college	—	77	75	—	39*	33	—	8	6

— Not available. Results for 1998 are not reported because the question about parents' highest level of education in 1998 was different from the question in the 2006 and 2010 assessments.

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

Table A-9. Percentile scores for twelfth-grade students in NAEP civics, by selected characteristics: 1998, 2006, and 2010

Characteristic	10th percentile			25th percentile			50th percentile			75th percentile			90th percentile		
	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010	1998	2006	2010
Race/ethnicity															
White	113	115	113	136	138	136	159	161	158	180	181	178	196	197	194
Black	86	87	81	108	108	104	131	131	129	153	154	151	171	172	170
Hispanic	84	89	90	109	112	114	135	136	139	157	158	161	174	177	178
Asian/Pacific Islander	99	107	104	126	131	133	150	157	158	176	182	178	195	200	195
American Indian/Alaska Native	‡	85	85	‡	108	110	‡	132	135	‡	155	163	‡	173	183
Gender															
Male	98	101	98	123	126	125	151	153	152	176	177*	174	195	195	193
Female	108	107	104	132*	131	128	154	154	151	175	175*	171	190	192*	188
Highest level of parental education															
Did not finish high school	—	81	82	—	103	106	—	126	131	—	148	154	—	170	171
Graduated from high school	—	94	89	—	117	114	—	141	140	—	162	161	—	179	179
Some education after high school	—	109	105	—	130	127	—	153	150	—	172	169	—	188	186
Graduated from college	—	118	115	—	141	139	—	165	161	—	185*	181	—	201	197

— Not available. Results for 1998 are not reported because the question about parents' highest level of education in 1998 was different from the question in the 2006 and 2010 assessments.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2010.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2006, and 2010 Civics Assessments.

U.S. Department of Education

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally authorized project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The National Center for Education Statistics, within the Institute of Education Sciences, administers NAEP. The Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible by law for carrying out the NAEP project.

Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department
of Education

John Q. Easton
Director
Institute of
Education Sciences

Jack Buckley
Commissioner
National Center for
Education Statistics

The National Assessment Governing Board

In 1988, Congress created the National Assessment Governing Board to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, commonly known as The Nation's Report Card™. The Governing Board is an independent, bipartisan group whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public.

Honorable David P. Driscoll, Chair
Former Commissioner of Education
Melrose, Massachusetts

Mary Frances Taymans,
Vice Chair

Sisters of Notre Dame
National Education Office
Bethesda, Maryland

David J. Alukonis
Former Chairman
Hudson School Board
Hudson, New Hampshire

Louis M. Fabrizio
Director, Accountability Policy and
Communications
North Carolina Department of Public
Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina

Honorable Anitere Flores
Senator
Florida State Senate
Miami, Florida

Alan J. Friedman
Consultant
Museum Development and Science
Communication
New York, New York

Shannon Garrison
Fourth-Grade Teacher
Solano Avenue Elementary School
South Pasadena, California

David W. Gordon
County Superintendent of Schools
Sacramento County Office of Education
Sacramento, California

Doris R. Hicks
Principal and Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School
for Science and Technology
New Orleans, Louisiana

Richard Brent Houston
Principal
Shawnee Middle School
Shawnee, Oklahoma

Hector Ibarra
Eighth-Grade Teacher
West Branch Middle School
Iowa City, Iowa

Kathi M. King
Twelfth-Grade Teacher
Messalonskee High School
Oakland, Maine

Henry Kranendonk
Mathematics Consultant
Milwaukee Public Schools
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Honorable Tom Luna
Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction
Boise, Idaho

Honorable Jack Markell
Governor of Delaware
Wilmington, Delaware

Tonya Miles
General Public Representative
Mitchellville, Maryland

Honorable Steven L. Paine
Former State Superintendent of Schools
West Virginia Department of Education
Charleston, West Virginia

Honorable Sonny Perdue
Former Governor of Georgia
Atlanta, Georgia

Susan Pimentel
Educational Consultant
Hanover, New Hampshire

W. James Popham
Professor Emeritus
Graduate School of Education and
Information Studies
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

Andrew C. Porter
Dean
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Warren T. Smith
Vice President
Washington State Board of Education
Olympia, Washington

Blair Taylor
President and CEO
Los Angeles Urban League
Los Angeles, California

Honorable Leticia Van de Putte
Senator
Texas State Senate
San Antonio, Texas

Eileen L. Weiser
General Public Representative
Ann Arbor, Michigan

John Q. Easton (Ex officio)
Director
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C.

Cornelia S. Orr
Executive Director
National Assessment Governing Board
Washington, D.C.

MORE INFORMATION

The report release site is
<http://nationsreportcard.gov>.
The NCES Publications and Products
address is <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

For ordering information, write to
ED Pubs

U.S. Department of Education
P.O. Box 22207
Alexandria, VA 22304

or call toll free 1-877-4-ED-Pubs

or order online at
<http://www.edpubs.gov>.

THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

Civics

2010

MAY 2011

SUGGESTED CITATION

National Center for Education
Statistics (2011).
The Nation's Report Card:
Civics 2010
(NCES 2011-466).
Institute of Education Sciences,
U.S. Department of Education,
Washington, D.C.

CONTENT CONTACT

Grady Wilburn
202-502-7408
grady.wilburn@ed.gov

This report was prepared for the National
Center for Education Statistics under Contract
No. ED-07-CO-0107 with Educational Testing
Service. Mention of trade names, commercial
products, or organizations does not imply
endorsement by the U.S. Government.



"The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access."

www.ed.gov